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OUR MISSION AND OUR MISSIONS

A MESSAGE TO UNITARIANS

BY

REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE, D.D.

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Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

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OUR MISSION AND OUR MISSIONS.

BY REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE, D.D.

I AM one of those who believe that Unitarianism is providential, one of the divinely appointed forces of the world, that it has a mission, and that, having a mission and being alive, it must have missions. We are not simply disciples, learners of truth. If we play our part as we ought, we are also apostles, those sent, messengers carrying the word of a higher hope.

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth,"—this is a prophecy, you see,—"and the truth shall make you free. In his profoundest thought, then, truth and freedom go together, the one being the source of the other. And yet is it not a little remarkable that the Unitarian churches are the first body of Christians to exist on the face of the earth, so far as I know, who have dared to be free? I know no other body that has dared to trust itself utterly and simply to the truth, and thus be free. Every other body of Christians with which I am acquainted is bound, self-bound, to certain statements inherited from a past, the main characteristics of which were limitations of knowledge and a lower type of civilization than that which at present we enjoy.

I am well aware that there are men in the pews by the thousand, in these other churches, who do think freely. I am also well aware that there are ministers by the hundred, possibly by the thousand, who also think freely. But, in so far as they do, are they quite true to their or-

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dination vows? Are they quite loyal to the standards of the Church whose officers they are and to whose mission they have committed themselves? I bring no railing accusation, but I cannot understand how they can logically or fairly consider themselves free; for freedom means, not flying abroad as far as you please on wings of imagination and investigation, if you are all the time under the necessity of coming back and alighting within certain definite and preordained limits. This is not freedom. Or, if you have gone abroad in your thinking and have not come back, concealing the fact for the peace of the Church,— this is not freedom.

We have dared to be free, because we have felt that in an infinite universe beyond any limits that mind can outline there is forever God, and his truth and his life. Newer facts and conceptions than those of the past have been discovered, and we dare not shut ourselves away from any part of the divine truth or the divine life.

We are free then, not as of right, but because we hold it to be our bounden and most sacred duty; for truth is sacred, and truth only is sacred. A mistake, a misconception, a limitation of knowledge, however venerable, is still only a mistake, a misconception, a limitation. We are committed only to one thing,— to finding the truth, to living the truth, to spreading the truth, to helping organize the truth of God into the growing life of the world.

The Unitarian mission, then, is this of the truth-seeker and the truth-proclaimer. Thousands of men have, as they suppose, outgrown the limits, not only of the Church, which they *have* outgrown, but of religion as well. It is our mission to show them that religion is something that cannot be outgrown, that it only becomes

grander when freely growing and clothed in the fairer colors of truth, woven no matter in what nation or under whatever name. We have a task assigned to us, one of the grandest and most magnificent of all the world,— a task that the other churches cannot consistently and logically enter upon; for, just in so far as they do enter upon it, they cease to be true and loyal to the standards which they have sworn to defend and uphold. The old universe has passed away. The old thought of the origin and nature of man has passed away,— passed, I mean, from free and intelligent minds. The old thought of destiny, of salvation, has passed away, or is rapidly being left behind.

In other words, the theology of Christendom, as it has been handed down to us for the last thousand years, sprung out of certain definite conceptions of the universe and of God and of man; and, to the growing intelligence of the modern world, the new revelation that is coming to man is displacing these conceptions. And the work most needed to-day is the reorganization, the reconstruction of theological thought, in order to bring it into accord with that which is the demonstrated truth of our Father in heaven; for only thus can religion itself be saved as the practical possession of the common people of the world. And this great work of intellectual reconstruction, of teaching the new truth about God and the universe, and man and destiny,— this is the holy privilege of the Unitarian churches.

As I said a moment ago,— let me emphasize it by a brief reiteration,— this is our work and ours alone, because we are free, because we are not only disloyal to our past in undertaking it, but because only by undertaking it can we be really and truly loyal.

Another thing which constitutes a part of our great mission: There are thousands of people in the old-time churches all over the country and all over the world who are growing more and more dissatisfied. They are troubled, they are thinking, they are questioning. As Oliver Wendell Holmes has said somewhere,— I quote his idea, not his words,— this free thought and these new ideas are in the air; and people must shut themselves away from the common intellectual air of the world if they do not wish to catch the infection.

These new thoughts are in magazines, are in newspapers. No matter if they be only attacked, if they be only ridiculed: that calls attention to them. They are, then, in all the air. The new universe is creeping into the consciousness of men. It is a slow process. You know it took the world two or three hundred years to get rid of the Ptolemaic thought of the universe, and become accustomed to the Copernican; and even now we talk in Ptolemaic phrases,— we speak of the sun's rising and setting still, which is only a fragment of the old Ptolemaic idea. So we need not wonder if it takes time for these new thoughts to filter down through and color the common thinking of common men and women. But the new universe is coming upon us; and, in the new conception, God is not away off in the heavens: he is here, — the thrilling life and soul and body and hope and uplift and growth of the universe and man. This is coming. And so the new thought about the origin and nature of man, that he is not any longer a fallen being and under God's wrath, but a rising being, and led by God's love, whether he knows it or not,— all these ideas are coming into the world. People are shrinking from the doctrines of Calvinism that they used to accept —

that men are foreordained to be saved and to be lost — as passing phases of the old beliefs, and not to be accepted in the light of to-day.

All these things people are revolting from; and so in the pews everywhere people are beginning to question this point of the old theology or that. They are beginning to wonder whether they ought to stay where they are; and yet they are afraid to go. Why? Because they know, whatever may be the defects of their thinking, that this religious life in them, the consciousness of God, and that they are God's children,— that this is the dearest possession of the world; and they wonder whether, if they give up the religious thinking they have been accustomed to, they are going to lose this. At any rate, they are afraid that they may lose it. And this, they feel, is life; and they are right in that feeling. Rather than lose that, I would have them stay forever in the old: only I believe that it is safe to follow God, and that there is no loss possible in following him.

I believe that it is our Unitarian mission to prove to the world that men can keep their reverence and their love and their trust and their hope without doing injustice to their brains. I believe that God's true church is big enough to hold heart and brains, too, and that there is no reason for leaving either of them at the door when we enter. It is our business to teach and illustrate in our lives the permanence and the sacredness of reverence and worship and tenderness and trust and hope, all the sweet sacrednesses that have associated themselves with the religious life of the past. All these finer and sweeter things that we love and that go under the name of religion shall bloom in the light and summer fragrance of this new revelation and in the free air and under the sun-

shine of the eternal love. It is our business, our mission to the world, to teach and illustrate that great truth, so we can offer to these discontented ones, who can no longer honestly stay in the old belief, a religious home, religious opportunity to live and to work, so that they shall feel that they have lost nothing by hearing the voice of God and going out at his bidding.

And there is one other class of people to whom, as I believe, we have a special mission. Mr. Moody has told us, if the newspapers have reported him correctly, that out of the seventy millions of people in this country not more than thirty millions ever go to any church. I hope that is not true. But, if it is, here is more than one-half of the population of the land that the old-time churches, for one reason or another, do not reach. Many of them have gone away from those churches because the teachings seemed to them unreasonable, because the God preached seemed cruel and unjust, because there seemed no hope for man. They have thrown off the mental shackles, they have revolted against the moral cruelty. There is no hope of getting them back into these associations which they have left.

If they are to be religious at all, we must give them a new thought about religion. I take it, and this statement is based upon such experience as I have had with this kind of men, that they are not glad to lose their belief in God; they are not glad to give up the hope of immortal life; they have gone out because it seemed to them honest and manly, even at the cost of surrendering precious hopes. They have ceased to believe in God, because, as they have looked over human society, they could not accept the kind of universe they discovered, or thought they discovered, as the work of a wise and lov-

ing God. They are troubled about the dark places of the earth; they are troubled by the limitations, the inequalities, the pains, the sorrows and the wrongs; and they say that they cannot find any adequate reason for believing that there is that in us which smiles at death and passes through death as through a cloud that touches us not; and so they are "without God and without hope in the world," in this true and divine sense.

And it is our mission, something that ought to appeal to our enthusiastic devotion, to go to these wandering, unfed thousands, and tell them about God, our Father, our trust, our hope, and see if we cannot find them a place to stand, a little work to do, and an outlook that has in it something of cheer.

The old-time religions were not missionary. Religion was something that pertained to the family. The stranger had no right to intermeddle: it was an impertinence and an intrusion for an outsider to be present. It pertained to the family, then to the tribe, then to the city or the nation. But, as the world grew, and there came into the mind of man some foregleam of the magnificent idea that we are all of one blood, then there dawned on human consciousness the conception of world-wide religion. So the advancing religions of the world are missionary religions.

Does it not appeal to you, this idea,— that, if you have something that is worth anything, a view, a truth, an inspiration, a hope, it is worth handing to somebody else? If your religion is not worth giving away, it is not worth your keeping. And this is one of those things that increases by dispensing it. The more love you give away, the more tenderness you give away, the more pity, the more sympathy, the more help, the more truth-teaching,

the more hope, the more of them all you have. So that, if I find a man who does not care whether his neighbor shares his great beliefs and hopes and inspirations with him, then I have little respect for his convictions. I do not believe he has anything which he values much unless he is impelled by the generosity of his soul to share it with his fellows.

If our Unitarianism, then, is worth anything, we shall wish to do what we can to give it away. Organized Unitarianism in this country is very young. There is to-day no organization that can try a man for heresy: our organizations are only working organizations, that is all.

In the year 1825 the American Unitarian Association was formed. Before that the leaders and fathers had opposed an organization because they did not wish to form another sect: they only wished to fight out the battle of liberty in the churches where they were. But their liberty was not allowed in the old churches; and they were forced out, and so became, in that sense, a sect, whether they would or not. And then some noble men determined that there should be a missionary organization,— an organization which should be the missionary arm of the churches. It has no ruling power over the churches: it is simply our servant. It was organized, I say, in 1825. I wish to read to you three or four words which show the purpose for which it was then organized.

"First, to collect and diffuse information respecting the state of Unitarian Christianity in our country.

"Second, to produce union, sympathy, and co-operation among liberal Christians.

"Third, to publish and distribute books and tracts inculcating the correct views of religion in such form and

at such price as shall afford all an opportunity to become acquainted with Christian truth.

"Fourth, to supply missionaries, especially in such parts of our own country as are destitute of a stated ministry.

"Fifth, to adopt whatever other measures as may hereafter seem expedient,— such as contributions in behalf of clergymen with insufficient salaries or in aid of building churches."

That, then, is what the Unitarian organization meant in 1825. It has broadened and increased its work since then; and yet it is crippled every year of its life simply for lack of means.

I wish now to give you a few specimens of the lines in which it is carrying on its work, and see if it appeals to you, and see if you care to do anything to help them,— help them and help us; for they are simply our agency.

In the first place, one principal part of the practical missionary work in which we are concerned is the publication and distribution of tracts and sermons,— such tracts and sermons as are considered clear statements of the new views of the universe and God and man, and duty and destiny, for which we stand. These are published by the thousand, and scattered freely all over the land. And these sermons, through what are called the Church Door and the Post-office Missions, along with tracts on all these various subjects, are scattered, as I said, all over the country. And there is one peculiar and very interesting phase of this work. These sermons, for example, visit people who have no other point of contact with our thought and life. I know of cases out in Nebraska where a sermon goes to one household. Perhaps they are ten miles away from another family who

would look at it if they had it. It is read there, and sent on to the next house, and the next, and covers, perhaps, half a State, until it is all worn out. So these messengers of the new truth and hope are travelling in this way through the West and through the South.

Then another thing. There are places where there are six or ten or fifteen people in a little village or town, where there is no church that represents their new thought, and where they are not strong enough to have one. These people gather together, and organize a little church service. They sing hymns, they read the Scriptures, somebody repeats a prayer, and a sermon is read. And so a little church service is held. There are hundreds, thousands, of places like this over the country.

Then there is another phase of our work. There are poor old churches, mainly throughout New England, that have been drained of their once vigorous life. Shall we let them die? For example, there is the old Pilgrim Church at Plymouth. Of course, most of the strong and vigorous young men of Plymouth do not settle down at home. They go to Boston, then come to New York; they go to Chicago, to Hawaii, to Alaska,— all over the world. These young men are the vigor, the soul, the life, of enterprises all over the country and all over modern civilization. The old churches taught and trained them; and sometimes these old churches need care, just as our fathers needed care when they were too old to take care of themselves. Shall we let them die? No. Because other boys like these that are gone out are being born and growing up there still in these old churches. And so it is a part of our Unitarian Association work to nourish and help and keep alive these venerable sources of our life, our love, our worship, and our hope.

And then there is another phase of our missionary work. As you will readily understand, all over this country there are towns where there is reading and thinking going on. There are a few people who are ready to welcome our new faith. There are parts of the country where the word "Unitarianism" would probably not be even understood, and where its grandest statements of religious truth are looked upon as mere blasphemy, merely because they are not in accord with the old-time traditions and theories. But in these places there are a few who are ready to think; and in any number of these places there are enough so that they are ready to organize a little church, provided they can have some help. They are not strong enough yet to go alone. They must be nourished. They must have some one sent to them as a teacher; and, until they grow strong enough to support him, a part of that support must be assured them; and in this way churches are growing up all over the country.

But, do you not see, this kind of growth is limited,—limited seriously for lack of means. There are in this State of New York to-day certain places where Unitarian churches are fairly begging and pleading to be born; but our missionary organizations are not rich enough to buy swaddling-clothes or a cradle for them. And so we tell them to wait, when perhaps another year the people who understand the situation will be more generous: perhaps in another year the people will learn to care more, and will give us the means to help them on to their feet. This kind of thing is going on all over the country and all the time. There is not a town in this country of five thousand people where a little Unitarian church might not be organized within two years if we had the money.

I am not a good beggar: I would starve rather than beg for myself. I am not begging now. I am telling you, as clearly and simply as I can, the magnificent opportunities that wait for you to help God, help men out of the old into the new, into a higher and simpler and sweeter and nobler life. If it appeals to you, help. That is the extent of my begging.

There is another phase of our work which needs at least brief attention. There are college towns all over the country, such as Ann Arbor in Michigan, Madison in Wisconsin, Ithaca in New York, where perhaps we might organize a little feeble Unitarian church, and let it grow large in ten or fifteen or twenty years, but where we need to do a different kind of work, where we need to have a strong man. Why? Because there are thousands of students assembling there from all over the State; and we need a man who in the presence of that young and growing life can teach the new truth intelligently and persuasively, so that these students, coming in contact with it, may learn what it means and may carry back home with them its results into their life-work, wherever they may be.

There is little use in trying to do anything new with a man after he is fifty,— that you know. A famous old professor at Harvard used to say, It is no use to argue with a man after he is sixty years old. I think you can put the limit nearer his youth than that. Very few people reconstruct their ideas after forty; but young men in the ferment of their studies and in contact with their new life can be wrought over into nobler and higher ideas, and fitted for a grander destiny.

And so we plant in these college towns churches,— and it takes a large amount of money to keep them running,

— to put there one of our abler men,— one competent to fill a position of responsibility like that.

Now these, friends, indicate to you in some brief fashion the kind of work that we are undertaking to do, the kind of work that the American Unitarian Association stands for. Now what shall we do about it? In my pleading, do not for a moment misunderstand my attitude towards Unitarians. I do not believe that there are any men or women on the face of the earth more generous, more munificent givers than they. But there is one peculiarity of their giving which I would change if I might. Let me instance a case as illustrating what I mean.

Two boys grew up in a certain town in New England, and went away and became successful business men. One of them, as he became old, in recognition and gratitude, built a magnificent church in his native village. The other one built a magnificent public library.

Now have I anything to say against the giving of a public library,—for you probably guess that that was given by the Unitarian; and the church was given, in this particular instance, by an Episcopalian,— have I anything to say against giving the public library? No. Unitarians, as I have said, have given magnificently. Through some sort of fear of being regarded as narrow, being regarded as sectarian, being regarded as illiberal, they are giving broadcast all over the land to everything, and sometimes a good deal more than they give to the support of their own special and peculiar religious ideas.

I have no fault to find with this generous and widespread giving; except this. If somebody comes to you representing one of the old-time churches or a young men's Christian association, or something of that sort,

and asks for money, before you give it to him, will you ask him this question: In the case of the young men's Christian association, will you ask him if any Unitarian is ever admitted to hold any position in the body? If they are willing to do anything for you or with you, except take your money? Will you put another question before you give,—if they would give to help build a Unitarian church if you appealed to them? Ninety-nine times in a hundred they would refuse absolutely to give a cent.

And yet you are accustomed to be liberal enough to give to the building of things that you do not believe in. Give, if you will, to all the world; but give to the things that are vital,—to the life of God in the soul first. And remember these streams that we talk about as liberality, and that flow all over the world,—these have their fountain-head in the liberal ideas for which our Unitarian Church stands. Here is the spring from which these streams flow. If you let the fountain-head dry up, then the wide-spread and beneficent results also must suffer. If I were worth fifty millions of money to-day, I would not give to any religious institution that would not reciprocate and give a little something to that which I believe in, too. If they would be generous enough to let the generosity go all round, well and good. But I appeal to you, first, to give for those great things in which lie the hope of the future.

Be generous, then, in helping on the life of this great religious movement which holds the future in its hands. Think a little as to whether you have ever sacrificed in your giving. Is there any person here who has ever given enough, so that he has gone without anything on account of it? There may be many. If there are any,

I would like to make the personal acquaintance of such a person.

Think carefully then; and, as God has given you ability, give back to Him through the service of his children in helping on the divine life, in which lie all the beauty and glory of this present world as well as the eternal future.

Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast given us the privilege of helping Thee. Let us remember that it is the divinest thing vouchsafed to us. Let us then share with Thee that work, Thy giving, in consecrating ourselves to Thy service and the service of Thy children. Amen.

STEPS OF BELIEF

By James Freeman Clarke

Size, 5 x 7; pages, 311; price, 60 cents *net;* postage, 8 cents.

AN able advocate's successful defence of Rational Christianity against Atheism, Free Religion, and Romanism. In a vigorous, unprejudiced, and frank way the author emphasizes the cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion while at the same time undermining the positions upon which these three opponents of Rational Christianity take their stand.

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A FAIR, broad-minded presentation and examination of Orthodox doctrines from the Unitarian point of view. Although the writer's criticisms are acute, the spirit of the book is conciliatory, and the method reasonable and just. In a style clear and forcible is presented much wholesome theological truth.

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THESE lectures are admirable presentations of the vital principles of Christian faith, containing many helpful suggestions, especially for those disturbed by the transition from the old to the new religious thought. The subjects are: I. Faith and Belief: Essential Belief concerning God. II. Christ and Christianity. III. The Bible. IV. The Church and Worship. V. Christian Experience. VI. The Future Life.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

Three of Dr. Savage's Books

PILLARS OF THE TEMPLE
By Minot J. Savage

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 3-4; pages, 226; price, 90 cents *net;* postage, 9 cents additional.

THE foundation truths of religion cannot be too often emphasized or repeated, and the chapters of this book go far to clear up confused popular ideas about the subjects dealt with. To such confusion of thought the author is an eager foe: one of his unvarying aims has ever been to seek the fundamental truths of religion and to present them in words so terse and simple and theologically untechnical that equivocation or misunderstanding is impossible. The pillars upon which this temple is reared are sturdy columns of rational religious conceptions which devoutly concern the development of the higher life.

OUT OF NAZARETH
By Minot J. Savage

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 3-4; pages, 378; price, $1.20 *net;* postage, 13 cents.

CAN any good thing come out of Nazareth? Come and see," is the quotation on the title-page of this book, and with this query in mind the writer traverses with his reader the ground made historic by the life and teachings of the Man of Galilee. With deep sympathy and appreciation, and with an equally strong desire to clear the path of entangling after-growths, the author guides the way, forest-through, to the open of a cloudless and sunlit vista of the great and essential principles of the religion of Jesus.

MEN AND WOMEN
By Minot J. Savage

Size, 5 1-2 x 8; pages, 179; price, 80 cents *net;* postage, 8 cents.

A REVIEW of the respective parts that men and women play in the organization of society, their individual responsibilities and duties, their relation to each other and to their children, involving also the further questions of divorce and of woman's growing independence. The book traces the successive steps from love and marriage through the various influences and opportunities which, rightly used, lead to the ideal home and all the noble influences for good which emanate therefrom.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

THE

Unitarian Church

A STATEMENT

BY

REV. JOSEPH HENRY CROOKER, D.D.

These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

Adopted by National Conference, 1894.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON, MASS.

INTRODUCTION

THE purpose of this pamphlet is to give briefly and clearly certain information about the Unitarian Church; its history, its characteristic convictions, its achievements, its hopes. In preparing it, the author has had in mind the needs of inquirers who have come to him in the course of a fruitful ministry seeking the information which is here set down. Dr. Crooker has had the privilege of serving two churches situated at the seats of two great state universities, — the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. In these academic communities he has won the confidence and lasting affection of a large number of young men and women who have become and are to become influential members of the communities in which they live. He writes this statement out of this unique and happy experience.

The statement does not represent a narrow sectarian view or a boastful spirit. With all his fellow citizens in this free household of faith, Dr. Crooker recognizes that Unitarianism is not now, and probably never will be, the one universal religion. It is rather a particular form of the religious life. It is not so much a system of thought as it is a habit of mind and a principle of conduct. The

representative expression of this habit of mind is to be found in the constant witness borne to the present life of God in the present life of man. Every true Unitarian seeks to cultivate the religious spirit that includes all truth, and the religious sentiment that embraces all men. Therefore Dr. Crooker's aim has been to affirm the great spiritual ideals of the human soul. He has been more intent on winning the doubtful, relieving the distressed, and inspiring the indifferent in matters pertaining to religion, than on criticising creeds, or controverting outgrown dogmas. He has written in warm appreciation of all forms of sincere piety, and has endeavored to speak the truth in love.

The mission of Unitarian teaching and work is "not to destroy but to fulfil." Its purpose is not to antagonize other forms of faith, but to satisfy some of the longings which those other forms of faith express; to discover and emphasize the permanent and universal elements of religious thought and life, and lead such powers on to nobler employment. It preserves the historic continuity of the progressive spiritual life of the Christian centuries. What Dr. Crooker has written is heartily commended to all who wish to know something of the nature of the religious movement which seeks thus to re-affirm the religion of Jesus Christ, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

SAMUEL A. ELIOT.

The Unitarian Church:

ITS

HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS

I. HISTORY

I Beginnings

THE Unitarian Gospel began with the discovery that we live in a *Universe*. Its original affirmation was the unity of God. The great teachings of science respecting the unity of energy, the unity of life, the unity of humanity, are confirmations of that early conviction.

II Hebrew Prophets

The prophetic writings, such as those by Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah, represent the spiritual and enduring elements in the Old Testament. In their protest against sacrifice, idolatry, formalism, injustice, and selfishness, and in their teaching of the unity, holiness, and goodness of God, they set forth what are now the essential Unitarian principles. Their plea that righteousness is what God demands and what man needs, — that righteousness is blessedness, — is our plea.

III Jesus

We claim to teach what was central and essential in the message of Jesus. We lay our emphasis on the Beatitudes, the Golden Rule, the Law of Love (Matt. xxii. 34–40). We find the way of salvation described in his parables, where purity is set forth as the condition, growth the method, love the motive, character the fruitage, and service the expression of Eternal Life, or the kingdom of heaven.

IV Apostles

We do not appeal to the New Testament as a document of final and infallible authority, and we do not claim that the Unitarian Gospel is merely an echo

of apostolic Christianity. But we do claim to represent its spirit and ideal. When Peter declared, "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him," he proclaimed the Unitarian faith. When he described the ministry of Jesus to consist in "turning every one of you from his iniquities," he spoke like a Unitarian. See Acts iii. 26; x. 34, 35.

When Paul preached, "In God we live and move and have our being," and when he wrote, "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love," he stood on ground now occupied by Unitarians. See Acts xvii. 28; 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

And when it was written by John or in the name of John, "Let us love one another, for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John iv. 7), the writer defined the Unitarian position. There are other things in the New Testament, but these teachings made the glory and strength of early Christianity, and they are the things that are eternal and that we lay to heart.

V Early Church In the primitive churches there were beliefs in respect to the messiahship and second coming of Jesus, superstitions respecting baptism, and uses of the Old Testament, which are no part of our religion. But it is generally conceded by modern scholars that the original Christianity was not the acceptance of a creed but the adoption of a spirit like that of Jesus, and that the early churches were democratic in form, each independent, with no elaborate ceremonials and no radical distinctions between clergy and laity.

Great scholars representing many different denominations agree to-day that the *deification* of Jesus, as found in the Nicene and trinitarian creeds, has no adequate warrant in Scripture, and does not represent the original faith, but that it was a slowly developed philosophical *afterthought*, which was

rooted, not in the words of Jesus or the beliefs of his disciples, but in the mystical speculations of Alexandria.

It is also admitted that the so-called "Apostles' Creed" does not accurately report the ideas of primitive Christianity. It was not set forth by the Apostles themselves, but was slowly evolved under the stress of many controversies, and reached its present shape after the fourth century.

No modern church exactly reproduces the original Christian faith, polity, or ritual (it is not necessary that they should be reproduced); but what we claim is, (1) That many of the dogmas made prominent in the creeds of Christendom have no warrant in the teachings of Jesus; (2) That the spiritual and eternal elements of primitive Christianity are affirmed by Unitarians. Confirmation of these statements may be easily found in the oldest church manual in existence, "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" (distributed *free* in an English translation by the American Unitarian Association), or in the two works by the great Oxford scholar, Rev. Dr. Edwin Hatch (Episcopal), "Organization of the Early Christian Churches" and "Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages."

VI
Arians

At the first general council at Nicæa in 325, Arius denied the doctrine that was finally adopted—the Nicene Creed (forced through by the imperial pressure of Constantine)—that Jesus, the Son or Logos, is "very God of very God" (same substance—*homoousion*), and he asserted that Jesus was a being more than man, but separate from God, not begotten from eternity but created in time. The later Arian view of Jesus as a separate and subordinate being, of similar but not identical substance (*homoiousion*), has been widely held by the forerunners of modern Unitarians. The fact that Arius could truthfully appeal to Scripture and tradition against his opponent Athanasius shows that a belief similar to his had been the ancient and common view.

The Arians were at times very numerous, and they were often active in good works. Witness the missionary labors of

Ulfilas among the Goths (died 383). But Arianism was not a successful solution of the problem respecting Jesus' nature and rank. It neither saved the pure humanity of Jesus nor brought mankind into immediate contact with the infinite God our Father, while it subjected the Arians to the charge of worshipping a *creature*, — an intolerable situation. Unitarians a century ago largely held Arian views; fifty years ago this position had been generally abandoned. It is now held by few, if any.

VII Reformation

Many early Protestants approximated the Unitarian position, and four great men among the reformers of the sixteenth century set in operation forces in the religious world that resulted in a liberal form of Christianity. In 1553 Servetus (a fugitive from Spain, his native land; burned at the stake in Geneva, 1553, Calvin consenting) published his "Restoration of Christianity," a plea for a simplification of the Christian faith. It was not a profound work, but it provoked discussion and stimulated more rational thinking. Faustus Socinus labored in the same general direction — a disciple of Lælius Socinus, his uncle (both Italians). He spread his views widely in Poland (1575–1604), where they flourished for about a century, but were finally stamped out with great cruelty. About 1560, Francis David established even more radical doctrines, in Transylvania, where the movement which he inaugurated still survives. His disciple, John Sigismund, gave the people a charter of religious liberty (1568) — one of the first and greatest documents of religious freedom.

The prominence of Lælius and Faustus Socinus in this movement for a more rational interpretation of Christianity gave the name *Socinian* to those who denied the absolute deity of Jesus and the total depravity of man, and affirmed the unity of God and a spiritual, rather than a sacrificial, interpretation of Jesus. The name, however, has long since ceased adequately to describe Unitarians.

Arius, Servetus, and Socinus had this in common, — they denied the dogma of the Trinity. But we must note these differences: Arius dealt only with the rank and nature of Jesus, making him an intermediate being between God and man. Servetus was a free lance, somewhat erratic and wholly critical. He made Jesus not so much a separate being as a peculiar manifestation of God. Socinus effected a more positive and comprehensive reconstruction of Christianity. He was more humanitarian in his view of Jesus than the others, looking upon him, not so much as a unique being, as a "divine man." He also denied total depravity, vicarious atonement, and endless punishment.

VIII England

By 1600 these liberal views began to take hold of some thoughtful minds in England. Some English Liberals were, however, Arians rather than Socinians. But anything like a popular movement in this line was made impossible by cruel measures of repression. Unitarian literature was burnt, and denial of the Trinity was made punishable by death. In 1662, John Biddle died in prison from starvation under charge of teaching against the trinitarian doctrine. The last heretics to die as martyrs in Great Britain were Unitarians. Unitarians were not properly recognized by law in England until the year 1813, when the penalties attaching to disbelief in the Trinity were abolished. And yet, three of the greatest Englishmen of the seventeenth century were Unitarians of the Arian type — John Milton, Sir Isaac Newton, and John Locke.

During the eighteenth century, there was a broadening of religious thought among certain Presbyterian churches in England, — those whose chapels were held on "open trusts," not tied to a fixed creed, like the Presbyterian churches in Scotland; and by the middle of the century some of them had come to be Unitarian in belief. Joseph Priestley (Socinian rather than Arian), the discoverer of oxygen, was minister of one of these churches in Birmingham (1780). His work on the "Corruptions of Christianity" (1782) exerted a

wide influence. In 1774, Rev. Theophilus Lindsey (formerly an Episcopal clergyman) established a Unitarian chapel in London (where the Unitarian Headquarters are now located—Essex Hall). To this nucleus slowly gravitated many of these Presbyterian and other progressive churches.

The movement now had a centre and a name. The British and Foreign Unitarian Association was organized in 1825. In connection with this movement during the past century, small in numbers and cramped by many forms of intolerance and persecution, we find the names of such hymn writers as Sir John Bowring ("In the Cross of Christ I Glory") and Sarah Flower Adams ("Nearer, my God, to Thee"); such leaders among women as Frances Power Cobbe, Florence Nightingale, Mary Somerville, and Mary Carpenter; such scientists and scholars as Sir Charles Lyell, Dr. William B. Carpenter, Francis W. Newman, Samuel Davidson, Stopford A. Brooke, and James Martineau,—a group of immortals out of all proportion to the size of this religious body!

IX America The seeds of Unitarianism were brought over to America in the Mayflower. They were planted wherever a church was organized in New England with a *covenant* instead of a *creed*. The successive steps of growth are indicated by the following names and dates:

In 1715 Rev. John Wise, of Ipswich, Mass., the father of American democracy, published a powerful and popular book "Government of the New England Churches," which was a stirring plea for democracy, progress, and reason in religion. It insisted on the absolute independence of the local church,—a pure Congregational Polity, in contrast with Presbyterian and Episcopal hierarchies. It effectually kept the door open for growth and progress. This made it possible for Rev. Dr. Ebenezer Gay, ordained pastor of the First Parish in Hingham, Mass., 1717, to advance to a Liberal Theology a few years later and still keep his pulpit. Others advanced along the same line.

About 1740 Rev. Dr. Charles Chauncy, minister of the First Church, Boston, led the broadening religious thought of the time in a work, "Seasonable Thoughts," directed against Jonathan Edwards and the revivals of the day. Later (1784) he published a notable book, "Salvation of All Men," one of the most forcible affirmations of the "Largest Hope" ever printed.

Soon after the close of the Revolution many ministers of the old First Parishes (Congregational churches) in Eastern Massachusetts had come by quiet growth to occupy Unitarian ground. They had abandoned the Trinity for the Fatherhood of God, total depravity for the native capacity of man, the teaching of dogma for emphasis on righteousness, the deity of Christ for the divinity of Jesus; and, using the Bible more rationally and spiritually, they rescued the humanity of Jesus from neglect, interpreted religion as the spirit of a noble life, and advocated freedom and growth. Unitarianism was now *in the air*, partly as the result of the liberal thought imported from England and France, partly as the product of the culture of Harvard College, but chiefly as the natural outcome of the principles inherent in New England Puritanism.

The first overt act was, however, the ordination of James Freeman, a decided Unitarian, as rector of King's Chapel, Boston (1787), — the first Episcopal church established in New England. The ritual of the church was modified by the excision of Orthodox phrases and the parish became Congregational or independent. In 1796, in Philadelphia, under the influence of Priestley, who had fled to America to escape violent persecution, a distinctly Unitarian church was established. When Henry Ware, known to be a decided Liberal, was appointed (1805) professor of divinity at Harvard, the separation among the New England churches and ministers began in earnest. Two parties, Orthodox and Unitarian, were soon arrayed against each other in theological debate. In the score of years following, nearly all the old churches in Boston and many of the First Parishes in that vicinity became Unitarian in

theology, but without changing their name or organization; and they remain to this day the leaders in all Unitarian activities. During these years a great teacher came forth, Rev. Dr. William Ellery Channing (1780–1842), minister of the Federal Street Church (now Arlington Street), Boston; and his sermon at Baltimore in 1819, at the ordination of Jared Sparks, became the Unitarian Declaration of Independence. In 1825 followed at Boston the organization of the American Unitarian Association.

X Present Unitarian Churches

At the present date there are in America about four hundred and fifty Unitarian churches, a majority being east of the Hudson river, and many of these latter being the original churches of the early settlers, like those at Plymouth, Salem, Boston, Watertown, and Cambridge. In Great Britain and Ireland there are about four hundred churches in the Unitarian fellowship, with various names — Presbyterian, Free Christian, General Baptist, Non-subscribing as well as Unitarian. In Transylvania, with Kolozsvár as a centre, there are some one hundred and twenty-five Unitarian congregations.

XI Similar Movements

There are many religious bodies in general sympathy with the Unitarians who do not take our name. The Universalist churches in America are almost identical with the Unitarian in religious position and theological teaching. The Hicksite Quakers and Progressive Friends, carrying out the spirit of William Penn (who forcibly opposed trinitarian and dogmatic Christianity in "Sandy Foundation Shaken," 1668) are in general harmony with the best Unitarian thought. The Liberal Protestants in France and Switzerland have practically the same beliefs. In Germany there are many Liberals among Lutherans and Evangelicals, associated in the *Protestanten Verein*, who are in general agreement with Unitarian views. The progressive movement among the Jews, Reformed Judaism, is in substantial accord with the Unitarian spirit. There is a large and influential party in Holland, with the University of Leiden as its centre

of culture, which is Unitarian in everything but name. The Brahmo Somaj of India, a noble band of Theists who represent the advance guard of religious progress in that land, are in closest fellowship with English and American Unitarians.

XII Friends Without the Camp

It would be easy to make a long list of eminent men and women from all parts of the world who have shown great appreciation of the Unitarian movement or who have occupied a similar position. Dean Stanley, of Westminster, wrote some twenty years ago: "The Unitarian church, including within itself almost all the cultured scholarship of America in the beginning of this century, was unquestionably at the summit of the civilized Christianity of the western continent."

The great Spanish reformer and statesman, Castelar, made this declaration: "The simple religion of the future will be a religion whose dogmas are summed up in the two fundamental ones of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, completed by the purest morality, which breathes forth a disinterested love of goodness for its own sake," — precisely the spirit and ideal of Unitarians.

Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, used these words to Professor Kovacs, his fellow-countryman, a Unitarian: "I rejoice over your connection with the English and American Unitarians. Spread their ideas and faith as widely as you can in Hungary. Their faith is the only faith which has a future; the only one that can influence the intelligent and interest the indifferent."

Prof. David Swing represented a large multitude who have never taken our name but who share our general views of religion and life. His own words were just what are preached from every Unitarian pulpit: "From such a dark estimate of God and Christ as this old notion [of Calvinism] involves, it is sweet to return to the thought that the law of salvation by morality is not a lottery, but, like the law of industry, it lies open for all."

The interpretations of life and religion set forth in the great works of fiction by George Eliot and Mrs. Humphry Ward — the greatest novelists among women — are essentially Unitarian. Both of these distinguished authors have been very closely associated with the Unitarians. Many eminent clergymen in Scotland, nominally Presbyterian, practically occupy our ground, — such men as Rev. Dr. George Macdonald in his stories, Rev. Dr. Robert H. Story in his sermons, and Rev. Dr. Walter C. Smith in his poems. Two of the greatest literary influences during the last century among English-speaking peoples were Thomas Carlyle and Matthew Arnold; and both, while they cannot be called Unitarians, were, in the essence of their messages, really pleading for the things central in our Gospel. Three of the men who, in various ways, have most adorned and enriched the life of the Orient in recent years have been our approving friends, — Ram Mohun Roy, founder of the Brahmo Somaj, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, the celebrated Parsee philanthropist, and Yukichi Fukuzawa, "the grand old man" of Japan.

The four men, all profoundly religious, who were the greatest interpreters of human life among our poets during the nineteenth century were in general harmony with our spiritual ideals, — in fact, their words have contributed to the making of modern Unitarianism, — Goethe and Victor Hugo, Browning and Tennyson. We would not try to narrow these great geniuses to any sectarian position; but we do claim that the great essentials in their messages are the things that we emphasize.

Count Tolstoi, the greatest living literary genius at the present time, has recently given expression to the following views: "It is true I deny an incomprehensible Trinity and the fable regarding the fall of man, which is absurd in our day. It is true I deny the sacrilegious story of a god born of a virgin to redeem the human race. But God-Spirit, God-Love, God the sole principle of all things, I do not deny.

I believe in eternal life, and I believe that man is rewarded according to his deeds here and everywhere, now and forever. I believe that the will of God was never so clearly, so precisely explained as in the doctrine of the man Christ. But one cannot regard Christ as God, and offer prayers to him, without committing the greatest sacrilege." This is really a summary of the Unitarian faith.

II. CHARACTERISTICS

1. Covenants not Creeds

Unitarians in America use as the basis of their churches a *covenant*, the declaration of a spiritual purpose, or a life promise. Their bond of union is not a creed, — a set of beliefs, — but a statement of religious motives. In this they follow the early Congregational Polity, or method of church organization, which was formulated by Robert Browne in England, late in the sixteenth century, adopted by the English Independents, brought over to this country by the Pilgrims, and used by the original churches in New England. The covenant of the Pilgrim church at Plymouth (adopted in 1602 before leaving England for Holland) is substantially as follows:

"We, the Lord's free people, join ourselves by a covenant of the Lord, into a church estate in the fellowship of the Gospel, to walk in all his ways, made known or to be made known unto us, according to our best endeavors."

That of the church in Salem, Massachuetts, the first Protestant church organized in America (1629), is similar: —

"We covenant with the Lord, and one with another, and we do bind ourselves in the presence of God to walk together in all his ways according as he is pleased to reveal himself unto us in hi blessed word of truth."

Several very important facts are evident at a glance: (1) Though these people were Calvinists, they did not make

their Calvinistic beliefs the basis of their church organization or the test of their Christian fellowship. (2) This is not a promise to believe alike, but a promise to help one another to live better; "to walk together," not to think alike, — a simple and spiritual *covenant*, not a *creed*; an aspiration of the soul, not a theological confession. (3) These men of sturdy faith *left the door open for progress*. The anticipation of growth, and the expectation of larger wisdom, speak in every phrase of these covenants. Here we find the guarantee of liberty and the pledge of growth.

In after years, dogmatic and reactionary leaders in many New England churches overlaid these covenants with elaborate creeds. But on the rise of Unitarianism, nearly a century ago, those creeds were abandoned by these liberal churches and emphasis was laid once more upon the original covenants. The Plymouth and Salem churches, and many others, which have long been Unitarian in thought and fellowship, still have their original organization with the first covenants unchanged.

It is interesting to note that two of the most significant events in religious affairs in America during recent years represent a movement in the same direction. The Old South Church (Trinitarian Congregational), Boston, has set aside its outgrown and dogmatic creed and substituted in its place a simple covenant. Even Andover Seminary, founded (1807) to oppose and demolish Unitarianism, no longer demands that its professors subscribe its drastic theological confession. It is satisfied with a less dogmatic view of Christian faith.

Unitarians ask no one to sign a creed, because they affirm that dogmas are neither central in religion nor essential to salvation; and also, because it is wrong to tie the mind to finalities when progress is the true law of life. They do not reject creeds because they believe so little. They believe so much that they do not attempt to define and confine their faith within narrow and rigid bounds. The use of a creed (though it may contain many elements of truth) injures reli-

gion by diverting attention from reverence and righteousness (the essence of piety) to mere opinions that are often remote from life. This creed-system enslaves reason and arrests growth. It fosters duplicity and insincerity by leading people to pretend to believe what they really reject; to use old phrases in a new sense, misrepresenting the past and disguising the fresh revelation. And it also injures religion by tempting people to quibble about words and wear masks when they ought to be frank and explicit and clear.

Unitarians have very strong convictions; but they strive to keep them vital and practical by fitting them continuously to the facts of life as they are discovered. A creed is too often a tombstone set up to mark the point where men stopped growing. Instead of making truth authoritative, it turns the religious teacher into an apologist. Truth is no paralytic that needs to walk on dogmatic crutches. As in science, so in religion, life means growth, and growth means larger views and nobler sentiments. Fixed moral principles and an expanding theology go hand in hand as friends. Unitarians oppose creeds, not alone because they are wholly or largely false, but because the method is inadequate and injurious.

A covenant that is coming into increasing favor among us is the following: "In the love of truth and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man." All earnest, reverent, loving men and women can stand on this platform; and no narrower basis is adequate. The church ought to include all who desire to be good and to do good. We as Unitarians insist on strong convictions and positive religious instruction, but all this can exist without the use of a formal dogmatic creed.

2. Beliefs

It must always be borne in mind that no answer to the question, "What do Unitarians believe?" can be an adequate description of the Unitarian Gospel. While we are great

believers, we insist that beliefs at best are only fractional, and often only secondary, elements of life; and we hold that religion is a life. We have beliefs that are very dear to us, convictions that are very powerful with us, but we stand for something larger and more vital than these beliefs and convictions.

Moreover, we hold that many theological beliefs, or speculations, are too remote from the motives and ideals of daily life to have any moral or spiritual value. We have aspirations, sentiments, and principles, that seem more important than our doctrinal theories. Certainly they are more important than the dogmas, like election and justification, which deal with metaphysical problems that are no more a part of vital piety than the atomic theory or the binomial theorem.

We can put no brief dogmatic statement into any person's hand and say: "If you believe this you are a Unitarian." Among Unitarians true piety is determined by a different measurement: "What is your life?" The briefest definition of a Unitarian is, "The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man applied." This language does not mean that we claim to be better than other people. We simply affirm that *the spirit of the life* is itself "religion." No particular belief about baptism or communion, the Bible, or even the rank of Jesus, by itself makes any one a Unitarian.

A description of the Unitarian religion deals only incidentally with speculative doctrines; and it deals with them chiefly to show that they are relatively unimportant. We go deeper into life and ask, "What are your affections and aspirations, your motives and ideals?" Here is the real religion. We need more clear thinking in religion as everywhere else; but it ought to be first of all clear thinking about the practical problems of the religious life.

Our chief aim, therefore, is not so much to impose opinions as to cultivate the spirit of a true life, to develop and enrich character and to lead people into helpful services. We do

not assume that our theories or motives are perfect; but we feel that they include enough truth and nobility to save those who faithfully put them into practice. All that we can ask is that every one shall live according to his best conviction; this is the demand of God upon all. And we most heartily grant that those who differ with us possess large elements of precious truth, — sufficient for their need if they are loyal to it.

Among Unitarians, differences of belief cause no bitterness and occasion no censure. But just because we are so free to handle the facts of life, nearly all of us reach nearly the same conclusions. There is among us that general agreement on essentials that is found in the realms of science. It is, however, a unity in diversity rather than a formal uniformity of opinion. And as among scientists, so with us, those who differ with us are not "heretics," but beloved fellow-workers, whom we are to instruct or from whom we are to learn. In view of these facts, no one can make an "authoritative" statement of Unitarian affirmations that must be accepted as final and essential. We can only describe the religious convictions commonly held among us at the present time.

3. A Progressive Movement

It is well to remember that Unitarians constitute a progressive movement of religious thought and life. There is movement in all religious dispensations, even those most enslaved by tradition or most bound by creeds. Where there is life there must be change. There is progress among Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Catholics. But just at this point, there is a radical difference between us and many other churches. The changes which others resist, we welcome. The progress which they reluctantly accept, we most gladly foster.

Protestants in general assert and enforce a creed which is presented as a final statement of truth that one must believe to be saved. We put our emphasis on a method of discovery, being always on the lookout for larger and clearer views of

truth and duty. What seems essential to us is not any transient form of opinion, but the method of truth-finding by which progress is made continuous; and what seems supreme to us is not any particular mode of service, but the sentiment of love which constantly creates more fruitful services. Conservatives defend the faith once delivered to the saints. In the conviction that God now abounds, and that his oracles are still open, we reverently watch the present heavens and earnestly listen to living voices for the revelation of a still more glorious gospel.

Dogmatists decry innovations and stand guard on the ancient walls built around the sanctities of piety by a Luther, a Calvin, or a Wesley. But Unitarians, discarding the rusty armor and leaving behind crumbling traditions, keep in the open field and on the march, feeling that no one is so safe or so strong as he who is in the pursuit of truth; and feeling, also, that wherever men may tent that spot will be the abode of the living God! We move forever onward, not because we lack appreciation of past worthies and olden symbols, not because we are disturbed by doubt and distracted by uncertainty, but because we have confidence in the unfolding process, as a divine process, and, also, because we have confidence in the leadership of love and truth, under which we march. Therefore we cease to be Unitarians when we cease to grow!

4. More than Negation

The Unitarian movement is something more than a protest against the creeds of Christendom. If we destroy the old house of worship, it is to build on firmer foundations a grander temple. If we criticise a long cherished belief, it is to create one more in harmony with the truth of things and more productive of personal righteousness. We deny the less that we may affirm the greater. When Luther laid down the heavy load of mediæval superstitions he had more power than he possessed before; he possessed himself, with freedom to use

his strength in more fruitful fashion. The lad who goes away to school loses the petty notions of his neighborhood, but he gains the light and glory of a broad horizon.

Our affirmations of religious truth may seem very harmful to piety when first heard by many people, because apparently destructive to their long-cherished opinions. But let it be remembered that it is impossible to preach salvation by character without sweeping aside the theory of sacrificial atonement. To proclaim that God is a divine Father to all his children is a larger and more positive view of Providence than the theory of Calvin; and yet, it is absolutely destructive of Calvinism.

It is sometimes carelessly said that we believe little and that our teaching is negative. We do reject many things long considered necessary to salvation, but we do this because we really believe vastly more than our fathers did. We are not living in the eclipse but at the dawn of rational faith. We believe so absolutely in God as goodness that we claim that more than a small fraction of mankind will be saved. We believe so profoundly in the moral law that we hold that only holiness is blessedness. We believe so mightily in the sincerity of Providence that we teach that it is a thousandfold better to bear our own cross than to hide behind the cross of Jesus. We believe so fully in human nature that we assert that it was capable of producing Jesus of Nazareth.

We are not Unitarians because we reject the dogma of the Trinity; we are Unitarians because we have put ourselves under the command of reason and have accepted the modern discoveries of the unity in things and souls. Our disbelief in the trinitarian formula is merely incidental to our sublimely positive convictions respecting God and man. It is what we have discovered about the universe that discredits the Nicene creed. We have therefore put aside this formula, not because it is wholly false and not because we have lost our faith in the Almighty, but because the old words do not adequately describe our thought of the immanent God.

We are not Unitarians because we deny the deity of Jesus; we are Unitarians because we believe in the unity of history and the divinity of human nature; and these larger and more positive views of Providence compel us to think of Jesus as infinitely grander and more helpful than a mystical "God-Man."

We are not Unitarians because we set aside the theory of Scriptural infallibility; we are Unitarians because we trace the revelation of truth and the incarnation of divinity so widely throughout the evolution of humanity that we are able to affirm the universal Fatherhood of God, and having reached this mount of vision, every dogma that denies the immanence of God in all souls seems a profanation, and every creed that implies finality in a text seems a rejection of the living God. We do not reject the Bible; we only reject those irrational uses of the Bible that seem to us to banish God from the present world.

UNITARIAN PRINCIPLES

I Human Nature

The position most peculiar and fundamental to Unitarians is the view of man himself. We build our religious ideals, methods, and hopes on the demonstrable facts of human nature. We begin with facts of human experience and find in them the revelation of a way of life and the demonstration of a divine Fatherhood. We go to the naturalist and accept what he has discovered respecting the origin of man. We go to the psychologist for instruction upon the nature of the soul, — the evolution of conscience, the scope of imagination, the power of sentiment, the authority of reason. We go to the historian and learn what humanity has achieved, tracing the onward sweep of civilization, with law, literature, art, government, commerce, science, and religion. We go to the educator and discover how intellect and heart are trained and unfolded. We go to the philanthropist and watch the creative methods by which defectives and criminals

are improved and reformed. We go to the student of comparative religion, and listen while he reads from out all the Bibles of the race noble commands for purity, sweet messages of hope, and tender prayers of trust. We listen also as he describes rites and symbols by which the spirit of man has pictured and cultivated the feeling of reverence and the passion for holiness.

We gather all these facts from the widest circle of experience, and in the light of these truths we affirm that man is a spiritual being, the outcome of nature's highest creative impulse. A being, imperfect but progressive, with native capacity for the discovery of truth, for moral development, for religious feeling, and for the outgrowth of sin.

We accept this truth respecting human nature as the basis and starting point of our religious doctrines and methods. Man has been very imperfect, but he has stumbled on through ignorance and waywardness, sorrow and superstition to higher civilization and nobler character. There is in him more good than evil, otherwise his creation would be a horrible blunder, impeaching the wisdom and goodness of Providence. We discover that there is an essential unity in languages, customs, and institutions, because human nature is everywhere essentially the same. There is no real division of history into natural and supernatural.

To all men, some truth has been divinely revealed; to no man has absolute truth been miraculously imparted. Everywhere men have loved, found, and incarnated in character and civilization some measure of the true, the good, and the beautiful. Sin everywhere and always brings pains and penalties; but sinners from the first have repented and reformed, for the way out of sin has everywhere been open to all, and in all ages it has been the same, the turning of the penitent heart through divine disciplines to its better estate in purity and peace. Saints, too, have arisen among all peoples because the soul has an inherent capacity for righteousness.

Wherever we find man, there we find a religious effort commensurate with his intelligence and conscience. Man has a native impulse toward discovery, for his reason impels him to ask questions and find causes. He has a native sense of justice that reports and enforces the moral law; and this ethical power enables him to turn from sin and live in purity and integrity. He has a native capacity for worship, and wherever he goes he builds an altar, at which he worships a divine ideal. From crude idolater to most spiritual theist, the soul feels after and finds somewhat of the common Father.

II Thought of God

From this thought of man, we pass on to our thought of God. Our knowledge of man makes our conception of God clear and certain, however incomplete. Because we have discovered the soul, we must believe in God. The finite divinity resident in man reveals an infinite divinity in a Fatherhood from which it flows. Because we have an intelligence that discovers an intelligible order in the universe, we are compelled to affirm an infinite cause that is intelligent. This is the only way by which we can account for ourselves. That parental life which reports itself in us must be akin to that which is highest in ourselves. The conscience within us which reveals and commands moral law, by uncovering what is inherent in the universe and taking its authority from the Immanent Life, constrains us to affirm that the Power in which we live is moral. For, if otherwise, how could we have a conscience? How have a moral sentiment, unless there is a moral life abroad in nature upon which it can feed? As the eye proves the existence of light, so conscience implies the presence of righteousness in the cosmos, of which we are a part.

The love which overflows in our souls must take its rise from the mountain heights of Infinite Being outside ourselves. It could not move my breast with such awful and mysterious power, were there not behind it the pressure of the universe. It could not so fill and possess me were

it not a constituent of that Universal Life, in which my life is rooted!

Therefore, it is when we take our stand within the soul itself, and survey its sublime and varied elements, — its capacity to discover truth, revealing the nature of the distant star and laying bare the creative processes at work in the flower; its ability to uncover moral law and also furnish motive power for hero and saint; its marvellous creations of ideal, affection, and aspiration; its sense of an Encompassing Divineness which pours itself out in a myriad forms of worship, — it is from these spiritual facts of our own nature that we rise irresistibly to the thought of a Fatherhood, from whom all this springs and by whom it is fostered!

Unitarians reach their belief in God by way of the soul. These essential factors, — thought, conscience, love — could not be in our life unless in the Universal Life. What is in the dewdrop is in the ocean. And when we survey human history, and see how the thought of God has dominated the mind of man, we must conclude that there is an Infinite Reality in the universe of which this thought is the report. It is unreasonable to suppose that such a persistent and prominent conviction should have no cause in the nature of things. This belief in God is given in the experience of life. It is forced upon us by the universe itself. We must accept it as grounded in reality, or admit that the universe is a deceptive phantom and our faculties false reporters. But science assumes that our reason is a faithful, if imperfect, discoverer of realities. If it were not so, there could be no science.

As, therefore, the pressure of the real universe constrains man to say "God," we must accept the report as true in essence however imperfect in form. And just because science traces everywhere in nature a rational order that implies intelligence and in history a moral order that implies a righteous Providence, we affirm an ideal of God that is best described by the one great word — "Fatherhood."

The thought of God is a commanding necessity of our moral and intellectual life. We cannot free ourselves from it. It is implied in the processes of thinking. We may deny the truth of this or that teaching respecting the Infinite, but somewhere in our interpretation of the universe this Reality will emerge under some name; somewhere in our explanation of life will the parental Verity be assumed. It is a thought in constant flux; for life itself, to whose varying limits it is evermore fitted is an evolution. But while variable in form, it is perpetually present in some form, sometimes wearing a human disguise and sometimes under cover of negation itself. For often we outgrow our real atheism by leaving behind ancient ideals of deity.

The necessity is not so much, however, that we say "God," as that we make the word mean something worthy Him whom it symbolizes and spiritually helpful to him who uses it. It is a sublimely inspiring word if it is made to comprehend the sublimity of truth and the inspiration of love. But we may lift up reverent hands in the elaborate worship of a vast temple, and yet be near the verge of atheism if we limit the family of God to those who worship in that place. What we need as a tonic atmosphere, in which to grow more divinely strong and beautiful, is a thought of God rooted in a trust deeper than texts, speaking in prayers that are more than petty petitions, creating a reverence commensurate with truth and goodness, inspiring a fellowship which embraces all that is human, and perfecting the hope of a heaven that is more than escape from penalty.

The richest fruitage of the spirit is a thought of God that links itself with all that is beautiful in nature; that embraces all souls in its providential ministries; that finds revelation wherever truth is discovered, and divine service wherever truth is lived; and this thought of God, in the fulness of love and sympathy, casts out the atheism latent in every form of inhumanity.

III Revelation and the Bible

If man is what science defines him to be, and if the thought of God is given in human experience as described, then we must understand by "revelation" a process as natural as human life and as large as human history. All discovery of truth is a revelation of God and all progress of mankind is incarnation of God. And while some writings become Scripture because of the precious truths which they contain, they are neither supernatural nor infallible.

We accept and honor the Bible as the best of many similar Scriptures, but all were produced by the same causes and under the same laws. It is the most valuable religious literature in existence, worthy our constant and reverent study. But it must be read for increase of life. Its texts must be handled by the free reason, not to formulate a creed but to enrich character. It has no monopoly of truth.

The Bible contains some errors and many noble truths; numerous legends and much inspiring history. No statement is true simply because it is in the Bible, while all its teachings must be tested by experience and subjected to the authority of reason and conscience.

Revelation is a process that overflows texts, antedates Bibles, and outlives creeds. It lies back of all litanies; it lights up all symbols; it clothes the prophet with power; it gives authority to institutions. In this larger view, we lose the Bible as a lumber room for dogma, but we enter it by the new gateway of reason and find it a rich pasture-land for the free soul. We escape from it as a prison, to come back to it as a wonderful treasure house of spiritual things. We cease to use them to club doubt and bind inquiry, but we learn diviner uses: we pile its texts on the altar fires of the heart to create heavenly motives.

We must have a theory of the Bible which includes all the facts, and a use of the Bible subject to reason and conscience. The Protestant creed-makers did the best they could; but

with only one Sacred Book before them and only a very limited knowledge of religious history, their opinions respecting revelation and the Bible were necessarily as imperfect as a theory of botany based upon the study of one tree. Science demands that we study all trees and all Scriptures and make our theories fit all the facts. We need not despise the creed-makers; we must not neglect the facts. We may honor the old scholar, while laying away his imperfect notion in the museum of antiquities, along with the stone axe. Any theory is injurious to both the Bible and humanity which claims for the Bible more than it claims for itself, and it nowhere lays claim to infallibility; and any theory of revelation is inadequate which neglects the facts of universal religion; while all uses of texts are harmful except those that make the soul alive to the presence of God and the hand active in helpfulness.

The Unitarian freely accepts all the assured discoveries of Biblical science and gladly adjusts his religious uses of the Bible to these facts, being perfectly confident that all this new truth will abundantly enrich piety.

IV Authority of Reason

Reason has been the discoverer and revealer from the beginning, as love has been the master motive power; and these are progressive elements of an ever-unfolding human nature. Reason cannot explain all mysteries, but it must be free to investigate them. It does not create religion, but it must be used to guide religious sentiment. It does not destroy piety, but only that which is false in the forms of piety. Unitarians demand the right to reason freely in religion, and they grant all others the same privilege. They strive to have, as far as possible, a perfectly rational religion; and they use reason and conscience as the supreme authorities in religious matters.

The authority of tradition and text, of apostle and council, is simply the authority of some other man. It is worthy of respectful consideration, but it should never be put between

us and the living God. The assumption that the Apostles exercised final authority respecting beliefs and ceremonies is neither historically true nor spiritually helpful.

V Jesus

If man is what we discover him to be, Jesus may be explained as the ripened product of human nature without dishonor to him and with clearer appreciation of mankind in general. If we follow the first three and most reliable Gospels, we must believe in the humanity of Jesus. If God is what reason and nature reveal him to be, the assertion that Jesus was God is unthinkable.

The whole world is becoming more and more appreciative of the wonderful excellence and transcendent nobility of Jesus of Nazareth; but the modern mind and the modern heart are beginning to see and feel that the mysticism of the church which has centred in him and which has grown up about him is in many instances a most unfortunate denial of both the Fatherhood of God and the sonship of man as taught by Jesus himself and as reinforced by modern discovery.

An atheistic limitation has vitiated dogmatic theology from the first, — an unwillingness to leave Jesus in the sphere of humanity as illustration and evidence of the divine in the human. But just here, and only here, is still his providential office, — not to stand outside the race as a unique and mystical being, mediating between heaven and earth, but to stand within the race as the Witness of God in man by nature, in this way revealing the possibility that is ours, and also helping us to its realization in saintly character. Jesus has been thrust between the soul and God by the theologians as a supernatural agent in touch with only a fraction of mankind; but if he is to perform any continuing spiritual service for us, it must be by helping us through his example and the inspiration of his spirit to commune with God our Father through a daily life that is loving and lovable.

The traditional interpretation which insists that all of God walked forth on earth in Jesus, and that he is the only son of

God, is a most unfortunate limitation of God. It is the negation rather than the revelation of Fatherhood. The "only" son of God? Is Providence, then, a fiction, and the "Our Father" of the immortal prayer an impertinence? The "only" son of God? Is there, then, only one point at which divinity and humanity meet and flow together? This sweeps away the fundamental postulate of science that the Infinite Power is everywhere directly and perpetually resident.

The modern world, in its practical work, assumes an immediate association of human and divine. The educator has found a more adequate thought of God than that which limits sonship to Jesus; for when he penetrates any mind and makes, Godward, a demand for more life, it comes immediately from the fulness of Infinite Life. The educational method, everywhere supreme to-day, lays emphasis, not on the *propitiation*, but the *appropriation*, of God!

There is something infinitely more important than the acceptance of God *in Christ:* it is to honor, love, obey, and serve the divine Life everywhere present in human nature. The "only" son of God? How the achievements of the philanthropist, who actually unfolds the latent divineness of human nature without resorting to Galilee, rebuke this dogmatism that forgets God! Instead of teaching that all of God walked forth in Jesus and nowhere else, let us rather affirm that somewhat of God abides wherever man resides. Let us make some better use of Jesus than to construe his life so as to shut out divinity from the human soul and outlaw as aliens all who have not known him.

Just here is the serious defect of much of the popular religious teaching of the present day. "The Christ," as a mystical being, is thrust in between the finite soul and the infinite Spirit. The fellowship of human and divine is broken asunder, man is left without adequate parentage, and God is denied immediate access to man. There is a failure of faith to find inherent divineness in human nature, to admit revela-

tion in all discovery of truth, to see a real Providence in all history, and to appreciate the incarnation as a fact coextensive with goodness.

The old mystical assertions respecting Jesus are offensive to the scientific mind and the humane heart, not because love of Jesus is lacking, but because the love of truth and humanity is greater. We crave a God who is at home in India as well as Judea; who is present with the same love in Moslem as in Catholic; who is as near to the repentant heart in Africa as in America. Every faith lapses into practical atheism when it becomes selfish, exclusive, and partial. Where, indeed, does God operate if not in all souls? How does man exist at all if not through heavenly tides of life sweeping every moment into receptive hearts? By what power did the Parthenon rise, Buddha heal human sorrows, and Socrates triumph in death, if not by authority of him who shepherds every soul?

As Unitarians, we love Jesus because he was lovable. We believe in him because he so faithfully lived the sublime truths of the moral law which he taught. We follow him because he revealed the true way of life; and having realized in his own character what is possible for us, he inspires us to live like him and educates us mightily in righteousness.

But with all our love and reverence for Jesus, we would not assert that he alone is our teacher, or that he represents the only type of life worthy honor and emulation. We cannot do without him; but we must not ignore the many saints and heroes who also reveal God to us and who ought to serve as guides and examples. As we need all the stars, so let us love all the mighty sons of God. Jesus does indeed reveal the love of God to us. But he is not alone in this. Does not the mother's love also reveal God's love?

Unitarians shun all dogmatism respecting the rank and office of Jesus, holding that the chief thing is to cultivate the spirit of his life. He ministers unto us most when he moves us to divine service. When we try to think of him as a part of

a mystical Trinity, he vanishes from us. To represent him as propitiating God is to deny his gospel. To assert that we can enter heaven only on his merits is to dethrone the doctrine of the divine Fatherhood which he preached. To do this is, indeed, to overthrow the moral law itself and also to miss the grand lesson of his life. We affirm that Jesus helps to save us only as he inspires us to fulfil the royal law of love in our daily lives.

VI Humanity of Jesus

It is astonishing and encouraging to note the rapid progress, during the last few years, of the world of religious scholarship toward the humanitarian view of Jesus, long maintained by Unitarians. What was once damnable heresy now walks abroad as most respectable Orthodoxy. A great "book of testimonies" could be made similar to the following statements, which reveal this remarkable advance. And this advance does not represent less but more faith in God, not less but more love for Jesus. The lives of the men holding these humanitarian views respecting Jesus prove, by their increased spirituality and enthusiasm for religion, that there is nothing harmful to piety in them. It is not pretended that these men are Unitarians in all respects. Their words are quoted to show how rapid and general the movement of thought in this direction really is.

It was not upon his deity nor yet upon the perfection of his humanity, that his [Jesus'] disciples founded the Christian church. The men whom he gathered about him regarded him in neither of these aspects. They thought of him only as the Messiah. . . . He is not represented [in Acts] as a pre-existent, heavenly being, but simply as a man approved of God and chosen by him to be the Messiah and then raised by him to the position of Lord. Of the Pauline conception that he had returned to the glory which was originally his [as a being subordinate to God], we have no hint in these early records.

"Apostolic Age" (1897), pp. 31, 55. By Prof. ARTHUR C. MCGIFFERT, Union Theological Seminary, New York.

Since Jesus prayed, we must believe that he felt a *need* of prayer. He offered sincere thanks and sincere supplications for

the Father's help. He looked away from himself as one consciously dependent. He subordinated his will to a higher will (Mark xiv. 36). He secured inward quietness and strength by casting himself upon the will of God. Now in all these situations Jesus comes before us as a true man. There is the same creaturely dependence that we find in ourselves. Jesus did not have one kind of prayer for himself and another kind for his disciples. As he approached God with the name *Father*, so he taught his disciples to do. The prayers of Jesus can all be prayed by his followers, as far as their circumstances correspond with his. There is nothing in them that suggests a consciousness other than that of an ideal man.

"Revelation of Jesus" (1899), p. 169. By Prof. GEORGE H. GILBERT, Chicago Theological Seminary.

Read all the books of Christian devotion from the earliest to the latest, and you will find that what they dwell upon, when they are not merely repeating the words of the creeds but speaking in the language of religious experience, is that Christ is divine, *just because* he is the most human of men, the man in whom the universal spirit of humanity has found its fullest expression; and that, on the other hand, he is the ideal or typical man, the Son of Man who reveals what is in humanity, *just because* he is the purest revelation of God in man. . . . In truth, the attempts of theology to raise Christ above the conditions of human life, and to give him a metaphysical or physical greatness of another kind, really end in lowering him and depriving him of his true position in the religious life of man.

"Evolution of Religion" (1893), vol. ii. p. 233. By Prof. EDWARD CAIRD, Oxford University.

Another signal example of the ethical development of doctrine is found in conceptions of the person of Christ. The change has amounted to a recovery of his humanity. Until recently, the Christians of America and England, with the exception of the Unitarians, believed that Jesus possessed and exercised all the attributes of God. . . . But now, although there are many who retain the old view, the theologians, thinkers, and scholars of the church believe that Christ was under the actual limitations of human nature. In knowledge he was not omniscient. He gained information as other men did. He shared the opinions of his time as to the universe, and in other essential respects was truly

human. He had wonderful insight, but he did not have omniscience.

"Moral Evolution" (1896), p. 403. By Prof. GEORGE HARRIS, President of Amherst College. Formerly professor at Andover Theological Seminary.

The whole christology of the Fourth Gospel is radically different from that of the Synoptics, and indicates a long process of evolution. As we have seen, the Synoptic Gospels hold the view of Christ's Messianic character. He is the promised anointed one of David's royal line. There is no hint [in the first three Gospels] of a superhuman pre-existence, or of a Logos doctrine. . . . His [Jesus'] doctrine of God's attitude to man was that of a Father ready to forgive every penitent, not that of an offended Being who demanded a ransom in the way of a bloody sacrifice. Such a view of God is repugnant to him. The later doctrine of a mediator who comes between two parties that are estranged in order to reconcile them by the shedding of his blood seems never to have occurred to him.

"Evolution of Trinitarianism" (1900), pp. 291, 342. By Prof. LEVI L. PAINE, Bangor Theological Seminary.

A short time before his death, Prof. Max Müller, of Oxford University, published this statement: "What for us can there be higher than a man? Angels we have never seen, nor anything higher than man. That is what Christ himself has taught us; he calls us his brothers and the sons of the same Father. What can be higher? He does not claim for himself a nature different from ours. Take his own account of himself, 'I go to my Father and your Father.' We must not make him contradict himself."

In the "Encyclopædia Biblica" (vol. ii. 1901) there is a remarkable article on "Jesus" by the late Rev. Dr. A. B. Bruce, of the Free Church College, Glasgow, an eminent and conservative Scotch Presbyterian clergyman. The whole article is very broad, though somewhat timid and indistinct. This paragraph will show its modern spirit:

The words of Jesus concerning the future show limitation of vision. In other directions we may discover indications that he was the child of his time and people. But his spiritual intuitions

are pure truth, valid for all ages. God, man, and the moral ideal cannot be more truly or happily conceived. Far from having outgrown his thoughts on these themes, we are only beginning to perceive their true significance. How long it will be before full effect shall be given to his radical doctrine of the dignity of man!

This great work, the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, is itself a most promising sign of religious progress. Its leading editor, Rev. Dr. Thomas K. Cheyne, is a clergyman of the Church of England and a distinguished professor at Oxford. Its contributors are eminent divines or University professors. But the articles all represent advanced scholarship; some, like the longest and most notable on the *Gospels*, are extremely radical, more radical than the positions of many Unitarians. A rational interpretation of religion, including the humanity of Jesus, is everywhere implied or expressed.

Prof. Adolph Harnack of the University of Berlin, who stands at the head of the scholars of the world in the department of church history, is a conservative student and a profoundly religious man. His opinions, therefore, carry the very greatest weight. He unreservedly admits, in a recent work, the truth of the proposition for which Unitarians have long contended, namely, that the deification of Jesus has no warrant in Scripture or in fact, but was due to his association with the Logos philosophy of Alexandria. It was not an original part of Christianity, but a slow growth beginning in the second century. He writes:

> The identification of the Logos [which had been thought of as an intermediate creative power or person between the Almighty and the Universe] with Christ was the determining factor in the fusion of Greek philosophy with the apostolic inheritance, and led the more thoughtful Greeks to accept the latter. Most of us regard this identification as inadmissible, because the way in which we conceive the world and ethics does not point to the existence of any logos at all!

Professor Harnack points out that the purpose of the Fourth Gospel (written at the beginning of the second century, but

not by the Apostle John) was to carry out the identification of Jesus with the Logos. Jesus was given a central place in a philosophy of creation, and this philosophy was provided with a personal realization or historical embodiment. This Gospel contains some noble thoughts and affords many true glimpses of Jesus, but his figure is more or less distorted by the mists of Greek mysticism; and the writing, as Harnack states, "cannot be taken as an historical authority in the ordinary meaning of the word." This assured conclusion of Biblical scholarship is of great benefit to religion in several ways: it frees us from mere speculations, which are now useless; it simplifies religious teaching; and it enables us to gain a clearer and truer view of Jesus.

The admiration of Professor Harnack for Jesus is unbounded, but it is admiration for a purely human character:

> Jesus is certain that everything which he has and everything which he is to accomplish comes from this Father. He prays to him; he subjects himself to his will; he struggles hard to find out what it is and to fulfil it. Aim, strength, understanding, the issue, and the hard *must*, all come from the Father. This is what the Gospels say, and it cannot be turned or twisted. This feeling, praying, working, struggling, and suffering individual is a man who in the face of his God also associates himself with other men.
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> "What is Christianity?" (1901), pp. 126, 204.

Among the most significant "signs of promise" at present may be mentioned the admissions made in several of the books in the series of "New Testament Handbooks" now being issued under the editorship of Prof. Shailer Mathews, of the University of Chicago. Especially significant because these little treatises are designed for use largely by Sunday-school teachers, and we should naturally expect a cautious and conservative treatment of all these subjects.

For years, Unitarians have taught that the story of Jesus as given in the first three Gospels represents him as a real man in loving obedience to God with no claim to deity, that the Book

of Acts reports the belief of the original church as purely humanitarian, and that in the Fourth Gospel we have a theological discussion about Jesus which reflects a late and philosophical theory of his nature, with assertions of a divine rank which Jesus did not himself make. All these positions are now accepted by the writer of one of these books, as the following quotations will show:

"In fact, all the way through [the first three Gospels], the secret of our Lord's life is his communion with God. But just here also is the perfection of his manhood." Of the view of Jesus held by the first Christians at Jerusalem, even after his ascension, as described in Acts, it is stated: "In heaven as on earth he [Jesus] is commended, attested, exalted, empowered by God, but there is no hint of a more intimate relation. . . . The death of Jesus is not regarded by the early disciples as atoning or vicarious." The admission is frank and complete that in the Fourth Gospel we have a mystical doctrine about Jesus, largely speculative and unhistorical: "The proof that the Logos of the Prologue [John i. 1–18] is the Alexandrian Logos is that the *word* is here hypostatised."

"Biblical Theology of the New Testament" (1900), pp. 39, 53, 54, 183. By Prof. EZRA P. GOULD, Protestant Episcopal Divinity School, Philadelphia.

When it is admitted that theological mysticism rather than historical accuracy is foremost in the Fourth Gospel, the way is cleared for the humanity of Jesus and a more ethical use of his name. And it is just this admission that is clearly made in another work belonging to this series, the best book so far printed in the English language on the subject which it discusses. The language is this (referring to the Fourth Gospel):

"The work as a whole [is] adapted to the author's purpose of theological exposition and interpretation, in a manner wholly incompatible with the clear, historical recollection of an eyewitness. . . . The outline of the career of Jesus is sketched in a manner not merely out of harmony with the triple tradition [of the first three Gospels], but irreconcilable with the historical situation, and with the narrative itself." In other words the largely

unhistorical Christ of the Fourth Gospel must be surrendered and we must go back to the first three Gospels for the real Jesus. When this is done, the mystical God-Man vanishes and we find ourselves in the presence of a real man, who is vastly more lovable and helpful.

"Introduction to the New Testament" (1900), pp. 252, 260. By Prof. BENJAMIN W. BACON, Divinity School, Yale University.

VII Minor Matters Respecting Jesus

We need give only brief attention to a few subjects: The stories of Jesus' *miraculous birth* are poetic legends similar to those that have grown up around many other great historic characters. They reflect and report the deep impression which he made and the noble spirit which he displayed in his life. Jesus was undoubtedly born at Nazareth, the child of lawful wedlock, Joseph being his real father, as Mary herself declared, Luke ii. 48.

It is needless to spend time in these days in discussing the accounts of wonders wrought by Jesus. They were not, to the people then living, what we call *miracles* (violations or suspensions of natural laws); for the scientific conception of nature as a reign of law did not then exist. Jesus probably had remarkable power over people sick in body and mind. From this nucleus of fact, the poetic tendency of the time, under the influence of Scripture (especially the so-called Messianic passages), produced these stories which bear the water-marks of the age in which they sprang up. As Jesus himself invented parables freely to convey his lessons, so his disciples wove these parables about him to symbolize and publish their beliefs in reference to him. This is the general conclusion which the religious teachers of our day are rapidly accepting. When this position shall be fully occupied, then the real Jesus will shine with brighter light and religion will work with greater power.

Jesus was in no strict sense the fulfilment of the so-called Messianic predictions of the Old Testament, which vary widely in character, while only a few relate to a personal Messiah. He was not the *Messiah* foretold or expected. He was

immeasurably greater, — a sublimely original character, rooted in Judaism but transcending Judaism.

The *crucifixion* of Jesus is the most pathetic and inspiring event in human history. It is the revelation of the divine capacity of human nature and the demonstration of Jesus' spiritual heroism. The cross is not the scene of a payment for our sins, but the evidence of what the soul can achieve; not a screen to hide our sins from God, but a source of inspiration helping us to outgrow our sins. The suffering of Jesus on the cross opens heaven to us only as it moves us to live the heavenly life, — to suffer ourselves that we may enrich the lives of others. The cross did not purchase God's love for us. That is a hateful and immoral doctrine.

There are insuperable obstacles in the way of believing in the *bodily resurrection* of Jesus. The first form of this belief was simply that Jesus was *risen from the dead* (not the "grave") and alive at God's right hand (Acts ii. 22–33, iii. 15, iv. 10). The *sepulchre* legends grew up later. The belief in the resurrection of Jesus did not create Christianity. The love of the disciples for Jesus — the motive and impulse of Christianity — produced by his lovableness, created this belief, which worked itself out along divergent lines from incidents and experiences now beyond our reach. These varying stories at the close of the Gospels, photographed at different stages of growth, cannot be harmonized. All effort to this end is labor wasted. This conclusion, toward which reverent scholarship at present tends, does not degrade Jesus or destroy Christianity. It enables us to be at the same time scientific and religious, to accept modern discovery and also to keep our love for Jesus.

We cannot for a moment admit that the *blood* of Jesus made God propitious, or that faith in it releases us instantly from the punishment of our sins. This seems to us an immoral and irrational materialism. We protest against the sacrificial interpretation of Jesus' death. Jesus never intimated

that he must shed his blood to make God love humanity. When the early Christians alluded to his blood, they had his life in mind, for in that age "life" and "blood" were interchangeable terms. As Ignatius wrote (about 117): "Be ye renewed . . . in *love*, that is, the *blood* of Jesus Christ."

VIII Jesus and Present Life

These and many other difficulties vanish as soon as we consider Jesus a purely human character. The quotations just given, all point to this end. They multiply with geometrical ratio as the years pass. They illustrate the irresistible influence and authority of the facts themselves. Sooner or later all religious thinking has to be adjusted to reality. As soon as the facts in the Gospel records are held in the light of the scientific spirit, as soon as Jesus is put clearly on the stage of real history, and as soon as the laws of human nature are applied to this subject, only one conclusion is possible — the humanity of Jesus.

This is a result to be welcomed rather than resisted, especially by the friends of Jesus and the champions of Christianity. The scientist, to hold to Jesus at all, must fit him to the real universe of law and order. The historian, to keep his faith in human evolution, must recognize in Jesus a natural product of human and historical forces. The philanthropist, to find the largest helpfulness in Jesus as he tells his story to sinner and sufferer, must set him forth as one who reveals the promise and possibility of the human soul. Therefore, if religion is to command the attention of thinkers and vitalize the work of reformers, it must present a doctrine of Jesus that is human and historical. Just so far as the force of these facts is felt,— and sooner or later all must yield to it, — the humanity of Jesus must be accepted.

The point I wish to emphasize is this: In view of the testimonies just given, which report the inevitable trend of religious thought, we may confidently affirm that there is no longer need for more debate on this point. The old textual and dogmatic arguments are not only pointless, but practically obsolete.

This is great relief and gain for both conservative and liberal. The *humanity of Jesus* may now be assumed like the law of gravitation. It is fast becoming an essential part of the thought of the world. Having, therefore, put behind us the old notions, and having reached a wider outlook upon human life, we find ourselves facing a new field of opportunity in religion. The religious teacher may now devote himself to scores of more interesting and practical themes. He now has more time for the spirit and message of Jesus as they apply to common human experience. He can come down from the vague mysticism of the triune God and press home the pleadings and inspirations of Jesus to godliness.

The task at present before us is to work from this standpoint, and make the character and teaching of Jesus more vital and creative than ever before. We must use his educating personality to chasten every wayward activity and to unfold every dormant human capacity. We must bring to bear his self-control and self-sacrifice to extinguish the animal selfishness. We must apply his spirit to human society as an organic enthusiasm. We must present him as an infinite encouragement to every one in misery, temptation, and despair. We must bring his life to bear upon human hearts to make them pure, heroic, loving, and fruitful in every good work. We must lead men through him to the discovery of God as Father and the recognition of their neighbor as a brother. All the indications of the hour show us that this is coming. The real human Jesus will be more loved, honored, and obeyed than the Christ of the creeds.

IX
Salvation

The answer to the question, What is salvation? is involved in the larger question, What is this universe? If we live in a miracle-universe, where God sits just above the clouds as a bookkeeper, making black marks against our names as we sin, and then rubbing them out if we will believe certain things about the sacrificial Christ, then the way of salvation is very easy. But no such universe as that

eally exists. The whole scheme is the childish fancy of a far-off time. In the real universe our sins make their mark, but the sinner can turn from his sins. The Infinite Father is always at hand ready to help him repent. He does not demand satisfaction, but righteousness. The old scars cannot be hidden behind the cross, but they can be outgrown. Our sins are not debts for which some one must settle, but defects which we must conquer and outgrow. Jesus does not rescue us from the punishment of our sins, but he helps us shed our sinfulness.

When men believed in a miracle-universe they imagined that, after doing wrong for a lifetime, they could step, in a moment, under a faucet of supernatural grace and be washed clean, and, by pressing a button, an angel would come with a white robe, and, clothed in the merits of Jesus, they could go triumphantly into heaven! But that theological dreamland has faded away. No such universe exists. The way to heaven is always open before the sinner. But it opens through repentance and righteousness. It runs, not through the blood shed on Calvary, but through the spirit of love which Jesus sublimely illustrated on the cross. The angels are near to robe us in white if we live a white life from the heart out. The way of salvation in the real universe is the way of spiritual growth and beneficent service. Jesus is divine helpfulness to any soul so far, and only so far, as he moves that soul to live as he lived.

A Creator who needs propitiation is not Jesus' merciful Father, but a monster. When we represent God as engaged in imputing the merits of Jesus to sinners, and passing them into heaven under cover of his blood, we strip God of the attributes that make him worthy our respect and love. The teaching that God will accept belief in Jesus' self-sacrificing love for loving-kindness itself, is tainted with atheism. If God be God, he will not bargain with himself, nor allow us to hide behind the cross; he will help man to be the goodness which he demands and which alone is salvation! From such traffic at

the throne, which was the way of salvation described by the old theologians, it would be a relief to escape into agnosticism. Salvation is not a commercial transaction but the enrichment of life; it is not an escape from punishment but a growth toward perfection.

If man is what history declares him to be, there was no fall of Adam, and all the redemptive schemes rooted in that fiction become unreal and needless. If man is what education and philanthropy prove him to be, he has native capacity for progress, reform, and divine service. If man's needs are what our daily experiences illustrate, his way of salvation lies through culture, character, repentance, and self-sacrifice. If God is what the discoveries of science indicate, the talk about sacrificial propitiation is little less than profanity. If the declaration of moral science is correct that merit cannot be transferred by imputation, the scheme of sacrificial atonement has no basis in reality. If Jesus' teaching is true that God is a divine Father who simply demands repentance and righteousness, then salvation is the love and purity which all — Christian and Non-Christian — may possess. And if really a divine Father, God will give all human beings an opportunity to acquire some fraction of these saving graces, whether they hear of Jesus or not.

As Unitarians, we affirm the glorious gospel of the blessed God, that "character" is salvation. Purity, love, justice, reverence, and mercy are the essentials of religion. We are friends of God so far as we are forgiving, helpful, devout, and truthful. We are in heaven so far as we live the heavenly life. Our spirituality is our salvation. But here it ought to be frankly stated that *salvation* is not a term in common use among Unitarians, partly because they object to the false views of life so long associated with it (the implications of total depravity, captivity by Satan, and God's wrath), but chiefly because they feel that what man really needs is something much larger than *the mere release from punishment*, which has too often been the

main thought. They emphasize the necessity of turning from wrong-doing, but the most important duty is growth in wisdom and righteousness: the realization of one's divine possibility.

x Immortality

As children of the living God, we feel the assurance of a future life. God gives man this immortal hope. It persists as an irresistible and indestructible conviction in the human heart. And as God gives it to man, he is responsible for its fulfilment. God does not give birds wings for flight and no air in which to fly. In yielding ourselves to this great yearning of the heart we lean on the integrity of the universe. God cannot be so cruel as to create in us a false hope. No just parent would raise an expectation in his child merely to deceive it. He who is truth cannot feed men upon lies. Our nature, the workmanship of God, compels this anticipation; we must trust it.

Our destiny will be shaped by the quality of our life. We shall import to that heavenly realm whatever heavenly things we shall have imported into our hearts here. The day of judgment is forever in progress, because everything bears fruit and makes a record. We always stand in God's presence, and at the bar of an infinite justice that is infinite love. The divine forgiveness follows the human forgiveness. We are forgiven in so far as we are forgiving, regardless of creed or race or time or place. This is the gospel of Jesus of Nazareth.

As this life is vastly more than a mere *probation*, we cannot think of the future opportunity of progress as simply a "future probation." But as the doors are open here for repentance and reform, we believe that this will be equally true in the life after death. He who has been our loving Father here, will not become a cruel monster the moment after the transition which we call dying. But it would not pay to sin to-day, if we should have a million chances to repent in the million years to come. We still insist that sorrow will last as long as sin lasts; and though the door of heaven shall forever remain open, no one can go in without love and purity.

An eternal hell is impossible in a universe that all belongs to God. To believe in it is so far to deny the Eternal Goodness. The object of punishment is not vindictive but disciplinary, not retribution but education. If the indeterminate sentence is a wise method for the management of criminals, it is a good policy for the universe in the discipline of sinners. The fear of torment is not the motive that creates heaven; it may restrain an uplifted hand, but it never commissioned a Good Samaritan. There is surely no encouragement to sin in believing that God will continue to be as good as our own hearts, which would save all. The philanthropic men and women who work to-day to rescue every wanderer can no longer believe that the infinite Love who moves them to compassion will himself overwhelm the same wanderers with everlasting misery because of the sin committed during a fleeting moment or from failure to believe an abstruse dogma. And to say that God cannot save all because the human will may finally resist all his efforts, is practically to abolish God himself. It is to make man infinite and God finite.

XI Sacraments

Unitarians do not consider church ordinances as sacraments with supernatural saving power. They follow here the freedom of the spirit, insisting that nothing shall be done as a mere formality, sacred because ancient. Sanctity inheres only in utility. That only is helpful which educates the soul and represents a vital experience. In many Unitarian churches *Communion* is observed, but always as a purely memorial service, free from sacrificial reference or symbolism. Adult baptism is practically unknown, but the *Christening* of children is felt by many to be both beautiful and helpful, emphasizing in an impressive manner parental joys and responsibilities. There are some who feel that both these services are too closely associated with outgrown superstitions to be any longer helpful.

In joining the church (increasing emphasis is rightfully laid upon the ceremony), the new member signs the Bond of Union,

or Covenant, and receives from the minister the *Right Hand of Fellowship*. By the attendance of sympathizing witnesses and by appropriate remarks, this ceremony is made an impressive and helpful event in the life of the individual and the church. The young people of the parish are prepared for it by a *Confirmation Class*, in which (commonly during Lent) they are taught the principles and trained in the sentiments that constitute our religious movement.

OUR GOSPEL AS DESCRIBED BY OUR LEADERS

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

made this statement: "Unitarianism is in harmony with the great and clear principles of revelation; with the laws and powers of human nature; with the dictates of the moral sense; with the noblest instincts and highest aspirations of the soul; and with the lights which the universe throws on the character of its author. We can hold this doctrine without self-contradiction, without rebelling against our rational and moral powers, without putting to silence the divine monitor in the breast. And this is an unspeakable benefit; for a religion thus coincident with reason, conscience, and our whole spiritual being, has the foundations of universal empire in the breast; and the heart, finding no resistance in the intellect, yields itself wholly, cheerfully, without doubts or misgivings, to the love of its Creator."

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

briefly stated in the following words the five leading principles of the Unitarian religion commended by Dr. Channing:

I. The Fatherhood of God.
II. The Brotherhood of Man.
III. The Leadership of Jesus.
IV. Salvation by Character.
V. Progress upward and onward forever.

gave this summary of the Unitarian faith: "We believe that when Christianity shall be reborn from its temporary eclipse it will rise again with two commandments instead of ten — the love of God and the love of man; with the beatitudes in place of the creeds; with a doctrine of self-sacrifice of the human heart in place of a doctrine of atonement; with a belief in the incarnation of God in humanity in the place of the personal incarnation of God in Jesus Christ; and that by degrees when that day shall come, man will be united to his Maker by tenderer, deeper, and more powerful ties than yet have been known, and that religion will assert a power greater, more comprehensive, and more healing to man's differences than the world has ever yet seen."

PRESIDENT CHARLES W. ELIOT,

of Harvard University, has forcibly described in these words the conviction commonly held among Unitarians respecting Jesus: "He spread abroad, and commended to the minds of many men, the loftiest ethical conceptions the race had won. He vitalized them by his winning and commanding presence, and sent them flying abroad on the wings of his own beautiful and heroic spirit. In a barbarous age he was inevitably given the reward of deification, just as the Pharaohs and Alexanders and Cæsars were; and his memory was surrounded by clouds of marvel and miracle during the four or five generations which passed before the Gospels took any settled form. The nineteenth century has done much to disengage him in the Protestant mind from these encumbrances; and the twentieth century will do more to set him forth simply and grandly as the loveliest and best of human seers, teachers, and heroes. Let no man fear that reverence and love for Jesus will diminish as time goes on. The pathos and the heroism of his life and death will be vastly heightened when he is relieved of all supernatural attributes and powers. The human hero must

not have foreknowledge of the glorious issue of his sacrifices and pains; he must not be sure that his cause will triumph; he must suffer and die without knowing what his sacrifice will bring forth. The human exemplar should have only human gifts and faculties. If these principles are true, the more completely progressive liberalism detects and rejects the misunderstandings and superstitions with which the oral tradition and written record concerning the life of Jesus were inevitably corrupted, the more will love and reverence grow for the splendors of truth and moral beauty which, as a matter of indubitable fact, have shone from the character and teachings of this Jewish youth."

BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM

THE assertion is often made: The Unitarians have never done anything to help the world. It is true that we have not done as much as we ought. And in discussing this subject we would not foster an unseemly pride or indulge in boasting. But we are willing to let the facts speak for themselves. The record shows that Unitarians have been fruitful in good works far beyond what could reasonably have been expected of them.

I Literature

Our American churches have never embraced more than *one two-hundredth* part of the population of the United States. If, therefore, our people have contributed one two-hundredth to the various beneficent activities of our country, our faith will show an average fruitfulness. Any larger proportion than this means so much extra credit. Let us then, from this point of view, consider a few facts.

On the ceiling of the vestibule of the Boston Public Library are the names of some score and a half Americans who have been most eminent in art and literature, in law and science. Of those belonging to the nineteenth century nearly *four-fifths* are the names of Unitarians — some hundred and fifty times

our proportion! Chief Justice Coleridge of England, in making an address at a banquet when in this country a few years ago, referred to the American authors most known and honored abroad. Every one whom he mentioned was a Unitarian!

In any list of the thirty most eminent Americans in literature that may be made, we shall find at the head Emerson, and after him will come Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Bryant, Bancroft, Motley, Prescott, Parkman, Margaret Fuller, Miss Alcott, Channing, Julia Ward Howe, Thoreau, Hawthorne, — we will not include Whittier, although he and others, while not nominally Unitarians, yet held Unitarian views in religion. We can claim at least half the names in such a list, however made up, and these by far the most distinguished. Or, in other words, about a hundred times our proportion.

Another list of names could be made of those distinctly or essentially Unitarian, that would contain as many distinguished persons as could be found outside our fellowship, such as: Bayard Taylor, George William Curtis, Helen Hunt, Bret Harte, Henry C. Lea, Edwin P. Whipple, William R. Alger, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, O. B. Frothingham, Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney, John Fiske, Jared Sparks, George Ripley, Charles Eliot Norton, James T. Fields, Richard Hildreth, J. T. Trowbridge, and many others. And we do not mention here many eminent persons who will appear in some other line of activity. In the series of biographies known as "American Men of Letters," published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., *eleven* of the eighteen are the lives of Unitarians, not including the Unitarian Quaker, Whittier.

We have not been as active in sending preachers to foreign parts to plant churches as other religious bodies. But we have put "books of life" into the hands of millions from the logging camp of Maine to the miner's hut on the Rockies. We would not depreciate the work of others, for there are diversities of divine service; but we contend that a church which has made it possible to put the poems of Longfellow

and the essays of Emerson into the sod house in Kansas has done as true and noble *missionary* work as was ever done by circuit rider. Both kinds of work were needed, and let each church honor the other's mission. We do not claim that the literary pre-eminence of these men was solely due to their Unitarian views, nor do we hold that Unitarians are necessarily especially gifted with literary genius; but it is fair to appeal to them as an illustration of what Unitarians have done for the world.

II Education

In the "History of Education" by the well known French author, Compayré, the two names mentioned in the chapter on the United States are William Ellery Channing and Horace Mann — both Unitarians! When we add to these the names of Elizabeth P. Peabody, the pioneer in Kindergarten work in America; William G. Eliot, our apostle of all the humanities at St. Louis and the founder of Washington University; Ezra Cornell, who made the institution bearing his name possible; Peter Cooper, who created Cooper Institute, a pioneer in its line; Jonas G. Clark, who created Clark University; Dr. Samuel G. Howe, the teacher of the blind; President Charles W. Eliot, who in reorganizing and developing Harvard University has done a monumental work for education in America, — we have at least a quarter of the names of those most influential in the educational progress of our land during the past century, — a number out of all proportion to our size as a religious body.

III Philanthropies and Reforms

Some of the activities along these lines have already been indicated: but there are others to be added, and they may be represented by the following names: Joseph Tuckerman, the first in this country to organize charity work (in Boston) according to what we now know as approved scientific methods; Dorothea L. Dix, the world's greatest philanthropist among women; Henry Berg, who inaugurated the work for the suppression of cruelty to animals; John Pierpont, the fiery advocate of all reforms, but more

especially temperance; Susan B. Anthony, Mary A. Livermore, Samuel J. May, names that represent some of the noblest efforts ever made for the higher life of the race; Henry W. Bellows, who was the creative and presiding genius of the Sanitary Commission; Edward Everett Hale, wonderfully fertile in suggestion, setting multitudes at work in many ways for human helpfulness. When we add Dr. Channing, who sowed the seed from which a world-wide harvest of humanities has ripened, we have ten in any list of the twenty-five names of the most eminent Americans belonging to this class. Nearly a hundredfold more than our proportion!

IV Civil Service Reform

No civic movement, in our national history during recent years, has represented a higher moral impulse or been more beneficial to our political life than the reform of our Civil Service. The man who started this agitation, Representative Jenckes of Rhode Island, was a Unitarian. Rev. Dr. James Freeman Clarke and Rev. Dr. Henry W. Bellows (Unitarians) were for a long time the only clergymen of prominence who gave this reform earnest and untiring support. George William Curtis and Dorman B. Eaton (both Unitarians) shared, with Carl Schurz, the leadership of this great movement. The two men who were its most valiant and powerful advocates in the Senate for years were Hoar and Burnside (Unitarians). Though the smallest of churches, we have played the largest part in this vital reformation of our national life.

V Statesmen and Jurists

In a work just published, "The Men who made the Nation," by Professor Sparks of Chicago University, the contributions of a dozen men to our national life are described. Of these, two were definitely Unitarian, — John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Four others held our religious views, — Benjamin Franklin, Horace Greeley (Universalist), Daniel Webster, and Abraham Lincoln, who, though not wearing the Unitarian name, defined his religious position in exactly the words in which our National Conference

describes its platform: Love to God and love to Man. It is universally admitted that Washington, though an attendant at the Episcopal church, agreed substantially with the religious opinions of his Unitarian friends, Adams and Jefferson. Two other Presidents have been Unitarians, — John Quincy Adams and Millard Fillmore. In the catalogue of distinguished statesmen who have held our faith, we find these, beside many others: Edward Everett, Charles Sumner, John C. Calhoun, and the great war governors John A. Andrew and Austin Blair. It is an interesting and significant fact that *nine* of the twenty-eight persons included in the "American Statesmen Series" (Houghton, Mifflin, & Co.) were Unitarians — vastly more than what could reasonably be called our share.

Among jurists of highest national renown may be mentioned Joseph Story, Theophilus Parsons, Lemuel Shaw, Samuel F. Miller, and John Marshall (the recent doubts raised in reference to his religious position on the Unitarian side are vague and trivial). We have here about a score of prominent Americans who would be included among the hundred most eminent public men in America. Many others, like Thomas M. Cooley, have held our views though nominally connected with other churches.

VI Religious Leaders

The mention of five names will show that we have not been destitute of powerful advocates of a most spiritual and affirmative Gospel, — William Ellery Channing, called, by Baron Bunsen, "a prophet of the Christian consciousness of the future," whose pages are deserving a far wider study than they receive; Orville Dewey, the impassioned advocate of a most practical piety; Theodore Parker, "the Jupiter of the American pulpit;" Thomas Starr King, regal as a king in pulpit power and brilliant as a star in spiritual illumination; Frederick Henry Hedge, in whose "Ways of the Spirit" thousands have found peace and by whose "Reason in Religion" thousands have been delivered from doubt and superstition. We say it in humility, without boasting: We have

been only a small handful of people, and often accused of doing nothing for the world, but we are willing to match these religious teachers, for eloquence, spirituality, inspiration to philanthropy, and general influence upon the life of the nation, with an equal number of men produced by the largest churches in the land.

VII Hymn Writers

Unitarians are often condemned as cold and unspiritual. Many have lacked the gift of enthusiasm. This defect is, however, probably more due to the New England temperament than to the Unitarian faith. This form of religious sentiment cannot, however, be destitute of spirituality, for it has produced many of the hymns most popular in all churches. To whatever church we may go, if we look into the hymn-book there used, we shall find hymns by Sears, Johnson, Longfellow (Samuel), Chadwick, Gannett, Hosmer, Furness, Hedge, and others (to refer only to American Unitarians), — a fact which reminds us that, while we may have opposed much in the creeds of the other churches, we have made large contributions to their worship. This appeal to the *hymn-books* shows that what we have done to enrich the songs of the sanctuary is far in excess of our numerical strength. The proportion of hymns in general use and written by Unitarians is everywhere surprisingly large.

In 1892 appeared an attractive little book, "The World's Best Hymns," by Prof. J. W. Churchill of Andover Theological Seminary, a competent authority who would not, however, be likely to make a selection too favorable to us. The author presents nearly a hundred hymns, ancient and modern, that he considers most worthy of honor. Of those written in the nineteenth century, about *one-fifth* are the works of Unitarians, some *forty* times our proportion, showing certainly a reasonable fruitfulness in devotional poetry.

Recently tablets were dedicated in the Hall of Fame in New York City to twenty-nine distinguished Americans who had been selected for these highest honors by the votes of a large and competent jury. Of this number, the following

twelve, or *eighty times our proportion*, were Unitarians: Emerson, Longfellow, Hawthorne, Horace Mann, Peter Cooper, Channing, John Marshall, Joseph Story, John Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, and Webster.

This brief record of things done for the higher life of man, the common life of humanity, is not made for self-glorification. The object has not been to claim superiority over our brothers in other churches. We gladly admit that they can show a long line of saints and heroes. They, too, can decorate themselves with many illustrious names.

Our sole purpose has been to make it clear that Unitarians have been reasonably active in good works; and that this faith cannot be condemned as unfruitful. The record proves that we have done a fair share of the work for the enrichment of human life and the amelioration of its miseries. This form of faith has not destroyed the humanitarian sentiment; rather it has fostered philanthropic efforts of every kind.

The record in our behalf could easily be made much stronger than it has been stated. Wherever there are Unitarians they are active in all humanitarian enterprises. They generally take the initiative in many beautiful ministries, like the Flower Mission, the Country Week, the Free Kindergarten, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Organization of Charity. Many activities have not here been mentioned, and many distinguished laborers have not been named for lack of space. For obvious reasons chief attention has been given to past rather than present worthies.

In closing this brief statement, one important fact must be made clear: Unitarians, unlike many other religious people, always work upon the broad platform of universal humanity. We have given most liberally to hospitals, refuges, homes for dependents, and schools; but this has never been done in a sectarian spirit or for denominational glory. We have never used our benefactions to advertise our creed, nor have we limited our charities to church lines. We have founded no

Unitarian hospitals. That has not been our ideal or method. On this account people in general are often not aware of what we have actually done.

SLOW GROWTH

SOMETIMES the Unitarian church is ridiculed because it is such a small body, and we are tauntingly told that our slow growth proves that our form of religion is unfitted for common people.

There is, perhaps, some dishonor in being so few in number; and we have undoubtedly had some faults (deficient warmth and lack of church enterprise) that have done something to prevent a rapid growth. There is, however, nothing so abstruse in our teachings as to place them beyond the average intelligence. Ours is the plainest and simplest Gospel anywhere preached. It requires no great effort of head or heart to understand our affirmations. This is fully proved by the fact that thousands of the common people in all Protestant churches substantially believe with us to-day, as every one is aware.

The chief obstacle in the way of a wide acceptance of our views in the past has lain in another direction. It is this: Those who come to us have to *reconstruct* their religious opinions and ideals. This is always a difficult and often a painful process, — to take down old idols and set up new ideals. This task does require courage, patience, and thoughtfulness. To get rid of inherited notions and prejudices is a difficult work, more difficult than many can perform. But this must be done first. And when done the acceptance of our Gospel is an easy gladness. In a wide experience of a quarter of a century, both among college students and the common people, this fact stands out clear and impressive before me: The difficulty in winning people to the Unitarian position is not inherent in our doctrines. It is the *dead-hand* of Tradition. It is easy enough to explain our principles; it is hard for people to rid themselves of prejudice and superstition.

But in a general way Unitarians have reaped as they have sown. We have grown slowly as a denomination because we have not sown sectarianism. We have exerted an influence out of all proportion to our numbers, as the facts in the preceding pages demonstrate; and we have done this because we have striven to enrich the general life of humanity. We have had missionary zeal, but it has run to *nation-making* rather than *church-organization*. Unitarians have elected this larger service, not because indifferent to the church and destitute of love for religion, but because they saw so many other things to do that seemed more important than changing a man's theological opinion, and also because they have never taken a narrow view of the church as the *only* agent of salvation. They have loved religion, but they have loved it as something larger and deeper than dogmatic belief or ecclesiastical machinery.

If the energies that have gone into literature, education, and reform (giving us a harvest in these directions far in excess of what could be expected of us) had been applied to church extension, we should, as Jefferson predicted, have become one of the large religious bodies in the land. But these energies could not work in both directions. Our people were not idle, but their service was humanitarian rather than ecclesiastical. Therefore we must be judged by what we did in our own line, not by what we failed to do along the line of ambition so often followed by other churches. In the very nature of the case, a body suspicious of sectarianism and concerned about humanity in general, could not do great things *as a sect*.

The truth is, Unitarians chose to do a *national* rather than a *denominational* work, and they must be judged accordingly. While others were out on the frontier organizing churches, our best minds were writing the books that have enriched the homes and filled the libraries of that frontier. While others were giving their money to church enterprises, our rich men, like Amos and Abbott Lawrence, were giving their fortunes to help all other enterprises except Unitarian missions, even

endowing Orthodox colleges! This was, perhaps, a mistake, but it was not done because they had no interest in their own church. It was because they saw so much to appreciate in all the churches; and also they felt that there was something more necessary in the world than to force their personal theological opinions upon others.

While the laymen of other churches were laboring heroically to extend their particular Zion, ours, like Dorman B. Eaton and George William Curtis, were using all their energies to reform the Civil Service. Both kinds of work were needed, and the larger churches have done both; but we gave ourselves so exclusively (perhaps unwisely) to these civic and humanitarian enterprises that little or no energy was left for church extension. And just because of this fact we are able to show a large surplus of national enrichment to our credit.

Suppose, for example, that Theodore Parker had used his splendid powers and vast enthusiasm to build up a denomination, as did Alexander Campbell. To-day we should have Unitarian churches by the thousand instead of the hundred. But he worked for other objects: for the freedom of the slave and for the intellectual and spiritual quickening of America. He practically sent out none to found churches; instead he planted our land everywhere with young men and women who have been leaders in every philanthropic, educational, and reformatory movement. This certainly was worth doing.

Peter Cartwright sowed the Mississippi Valley with Methodist churches. This was a magnificent work. Thomas Starr King might have planted the seed on the Pacific coast from which hundreds of Unitarian churches would have grown. Instead he saved California to the Union cause. It was better so. The great enthusiasm of Rev. Dr. Henry W. Bellows, if devoted exclusively to church affairs, would perhaps have increased our denomination as fast, proportionately, as Bishop Simpson enlarged the bounds of Methodism. But he gave himself to the Sanitary Commission and helped

as much as any general to save the Union. This was worth more than a thousand new Unitarian churches. Thus we see that the chief reason for our slow growth as a sect is in many ways creditable to the Unitarians themselves.

But our growth as a church has not been as slow in recent years as many suppose. In the score of years from 1880 to 1900 the Unitarian churches in America increased 35 per cent, nearly as fast as the growth in population, — a ratio that compares very favorably with that of the larger churches. In the same period the contributions to the American Unitarian Association for missionary purposes have doubled. The activities of the Woman's Alliance, of the Sunday School Society, and the Post Office Mission in the free distribution of religious literature are probably over four times as great to-day as they were in 1880.

But the chief growth of the Unitarian faith has been within what are called the Orthodox churches. The leading thoughts of Channing are preached every Sunday morning in thousands of pulpits that are not Unitarian in name. The views of Parker, Hedge, and Clarke are substantially accepted by hundreds of the progressive ministers in all the Protestant denominations. Hardly a remnant of the old Orthodoxy is left in any prominent city pulpit. It still stands written in the creeds, but it has little or no part in the vital convictions of intelligent people. In the religious newspapers of the land, what have passed as commonplaces among us for years are constantly set forth as discoveries. Frequently an editorial full of Unitarianism stands side by side with a condemnation of the Unitarian church! Everywhere people boast of their liberality and their indifference to creeds, — admirable when done with sincerity. We, as a church, are not responsible for all of this, though we have done our part to bring it about. It is due largely to the "Time-Spirit." This way of thinking and feeling in religion is now abroad in the land. So that, while our *church* grows slowly, our *ideal* is becoming victorious.

On this account some carelessly say: The work of the Unitarian church is done! Yes, indeed, if its work was ever simply to destroy Orthodoxy as a creed; for the old Orthodoxy as a method and system of thought is dead. But no true Unitarian ever so understood or described the Unitarian mission. The task of the Unitarian church has been something infinitely larger and vastly nobler — the cultivation of a rational and spiritual form of piety for the enlargement of humanity in general. From this point of view, the Unitarian church was never more needed than to-day. The growing liberality of other churches no more ends our mission than does the growing enlightenment of the community make the doctor unnecessary. The need was never greater than at present for agencies of ethical quickening and spiritual training. The enemy to be fought is not dogmatism but worldliness. We must use our freedom to establish the noblest ideals in society and in politics.

OUR SUPREME ASPIRATION

I New Christianity

The Unitarian strives to represent and embody in personal character and civic institution, the New Christianity which is rising all about us and which is the simple but mighty gospel of Jesus, enriched by science and democracy, enforced by the philanthropic impulse, and operated through the educational method. It puts character-building above creed-making, deeds of love above dogmas of wrath, service above sacrament, obedience to moral law above belief in theological statements. It makes the Golden Rule central. It uses the Sermon on the Mount rather than the Nicene creed as the chart of life. It appeals to love instead of fear. It encourages growth and discovery rather than conformity of opinion. It pleads for brotherhood and co-operation. It insists on freedom. It uses the Bible, not to make a creed, but to enrich the life.

The New Christianity finds the service of God in helpfulness to man, the way to heaven in the path of righteousness, the sure salvation in perfected manhood, the only authority in love and reason, an adequate basis of religious organization in a common purpose to be good, and to do good: all truth its scripture, all men its field and fellowship, all loving souls its saints and ministers, a kingdom of heaven for all on earth its ideal and aspiration.

II Unitarian Church

We strive to make the Unitarian church the efficient agent and organic expression of the New Christianity. We pour into its worship the warmth and gladness of an impassioned love for God, the Father of all. We keep our hymns and prayers free from selfish importunity, offensive exhortation, and doctrinal discussion. We make them the simple but earnest outpouring of trustful hearts, wholly intent on personal communion with our Creator. We would shun the trivial speech and flippant spirit that destroy true reverence. We would be free from the mournful tone and affected gravity that spread gloom without bringing solemnity. We would cultivate the dignity and the enthusiasm of a saintly but joyous piety. We would make our worship so catholic, so tender, so vital, that all, of whatever theological opinion, may feel themselves at "the east window of divine surprise." Then tears shall cease, burdens shall fall, and the ecstasy of pure devotion shall fill the soul.

In the pulpit of this church stands a teacher of sacred things to speak with absolute sincerity, with perfect freedom, and with forceful conviction. He will affirm more than he will deny, using most often words of comfort and of cheer. The pulpit is a watch-tower from which he scans the outer heavens and reports all discoveries that bear upon conduct. To it he fetches out of the depths of his heart, and applies to others for constraint and inspiration, all the spiritual and spiritualizing truths of his own experience. He uses all facts so far as he can make them into a gospel. He is a teacher,

but a teacher of right living, not intent on making converts to a creed, but anxious only that his message carry repentance to sinners, hope to the sad, and comfort to the suffering, as well as joy and inspiration to the strong and courageous. He administers the spirit of Jesus to enrich and ennoble human life. He tells that wonderful story to make men strong, pure, forgiving, and loving. He uses the Bible to make powerful in human affairs its great lesson of righteousness, — the righteousness of the heart that brings peace.

We insist that the church is a precious and paramount institution, because human nature is essentially religious. Religion is not only an important part of life, it is a part that needs wise and careful training. Therefore, those who neglect the church neglect what is highest in themselves and most useful to civilization. Indifference to religious nurture and church service is indifference to our humanity proper. The great spiritual gifts and graces, to cultivate which is the task of the church, are no more likely to spring up in us spontaneously than the mastery of a musical instrument or the command of a foreign tongue. If we are to gather the harvest, we must plant the seed and cultivate the soil.

We cannot have the beauty and serenity of life in home and neighborhood that are bound up with the Sabbath, unless we maintain the religious uses of this day of rest. And we make the best use of Sunday only when we use it to expand what is best within us, and spend its hours in a manner radically different than we do the other days of the week. We cannot possess and preserve the great moral and spiritual convictions and enthusiasms which make for peace and righteousness, unless we loyally support this institution — the church — created for the development of the religious life and consecrated to the service of the highest and noblest interests of the human race.

The neglect of the religious training of children is not only an injury to them but a sin against civilization. We are under a heavier obligation to give our children the best religion that

we have found than we are to have them correctly taught in music or mathematics.

III The Real Unitarian

Out of this church, alive with various educational and philanthropic activities, all imbued with the religious purpose and devoted to religious ends, we strive to send forth into the world to be a part of its best life the real Unitarian, a man who demands freedom for himself and grants the same liberty to his neighbor; who bestows his love broadly regardless of sect, fellowships all seekers for the truth, and labors for man on account of his need rather than his creed; who follows reason as the authority for truth and conscience as the guide to conduct, allowing no text or tradition to blind the eye or enslave the heart, and always striving to be wiser to-day than yesterday and better to-morrow than to-day.

The real Unitarian is one who believes that it is diviner to do a deed of love than to subscribe to any form of doctrine; who holds that religion is spiritual worship, personal righteousness, and helpful service; and who learns from Jesus to be forgiving, merciful, and useful.

The real Unitarian is one who sees the universe under a law that is love, finds nature interwoven with Fatherhood, and beholds God immanent in all souls; who traces the divine revelation in all discoveries of truth; and who has faith that Providence embraces humanity, and that all wanderers will some day find their way home to the Infinite Goodness.

And these great root-truths and imperial sentiments, so widely shared in varying measures by others, being no monopoly of ours, will help us all to march forward through life, serene under abuse, patient in disappointments, heroic in danger, victorious in temptation, helpful with love and cheerful with hope in our little corner, feeling that the dear God is our Father, and that beyond the grave lies in immortal light and blessedness the household of our affections.

APPENDIX

LITERATURE

THE following works are historical, and they tell the story of the Unitarian movement:

I. A Short History of Unitarianism since the Reformation. $0.50.
Rev. Frederick B. Mott.

II. Unitarianism since the Reformation. 254 pp. 1.50.
Rev. Joseph Henry Allen, D.D.

III. Old and New Unitarian Belief. 246 pp. 1.50.
Rev. John W. Chadwick.

IV. Unitarianism: Origin and History. 400 pp. 1.00.
Lectures by Sixteen Eminent Unitarians.

V. Heads of English Unitarian History. 138 pp. .60.
Rev. Alexander Gordon.

VI. A Historical Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Unitarian Christian Doctrine in Modern Times. .10.

The Unitarian Affirmations respecting religion are fully described in these books, — that by Channing is especially rich in other directions:

I. Channing, Works. 1 vol. 1060 pp. $1.00.

II. Parker, Views of Religion: Selections. 1 vol. 466 pp. 1.00.

III. Dewey, Works. 1 vol. 804 pp. 1.00.

IV. Our Unitarian Gospel. 282 pp. 1.00.
Rev. Minot J. Savage, D.D.

V. The Power and Promise of the Liberal Faith. 145 pp. .75.
Rev. Thomas R. Slicer.

VI. Positive Aspects of Unitarian Christianity. 274 pp. .75.
By English Writers with Introduction by Dr. Martineau.

VII. Forward Movement Lectures. 99 pp. .40.
Rev. Brooke Herford, D.D.

These books can be ordered from the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon St., Boston, Mass., and to this body may also be addressed inquiries in regard to Unitarian work and organization.

The following pamphlets (from 16 to 40 pp.) give the views commonly held by Unitarians upon the subjects of which they treat, and they are sent *free* on application to the American Unitarian Association, Boston, Mass.:

(1) The Faith of a Free Church: Rev. S. M. Crothers, D.D.

(2) What do Unitarians Believe? Rev. Charles W. Wendté.

(3) Unitarianism. Rev. Rush R. Shippen.

(4) Our Gospel. Rev. M. J. Savage, D.D.

(5) Unitarian Principles. Rev. Edward Everett Hale, D.D.

(6) The Main Lines of Religion as held by Unitarians. By Rev. Brooke Herford, D.D.

(7) Unitarianism: it is a Positive Faith, and rightly claims our Loyalty. By Rev. Minot J. Savage, D.D.

(8) The Church of the Spirit. By Rev. Francis G. Peabody, D.D.

(9) God . . . Rev. Samuel R. Calthrop, LL.D.

(10) The Real Jesus. Rev. Howard N. Brown.

(11) The Bible in Theology. Rev. W. W. Fenn.

(12) The Immortal Hope. Rev. John W. Chadwick.

(13) The Theology of Unitarians. Rev. Charles C. Everett, D.D.

(14) Incarnation. Rev. William C. Gannett.

(15) Eternal Punishment. Rev. Thomas Starr King.

[No. 3]

HUMAN NATURE

NOT RUINED, BUT INCOMPLETE

BY

CHARLES CARROLL EVERETT, D.D., LL.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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HUMAN NATURE NOT RUINED, BUT INCOMPLETE.

BY REV. C. C. EVERETT.

Two theories of Human Nature are often expressed, neither of which is wholly true, and neither of which is fully believed, even by those who have adopted it as their own. One of these theories is that human nature is wholly evil; the other is that human nature is wholly good and perfect. One explains all the evil in the world by the utterly depraved natures of the individuals who make up society; the other explains the sins of the individual by the evil which he finds embodied in the outer world. To the one, each separate life is a turbid stream, polluting the fair earth; to the other, each new life is a fountain sweet and pure, whose waters will soon become polluted by the mire through which they flow. Neither of these theories is fully believed. Those who insist most strongly on the total depravity of human nature, we find recognizing, in actual life, the native virtues of the soul; while those who insist on the perfect purity of the individual nature at its birth, recognize differences in character, and original predispositions to certain faults or vices. Neither of these theories can be wholly true. If man is wholly evil, whence the good that is in the world? If man is

wholly good, whence the evil? The doctrine of the total depravity of man, indeed, confutes itself. If it is my nature to do what we call evil, then it ceases to be evil. The lines of Dr. Watts suggest a truth that may be applied to every sphere of life. We say, —

> "Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
> For God hath made them so;
> Let bears and lions growl and fight,
> For 'tis their nature too."

We call a man sinful in proportion as he lives like the beasts; but if that is his nature, if God has made him so, it ceases to be sin. It is a well-known fact, that a large part of this continent, as well as of Europe, was once covered with glaciers. Scientific men formerly attempted to explain this accumulation of glacial ice, by showing how a period of intense cold might have been brought upon the earth. The colder the earth of the past, the better, they thought, they understood this glacial action. It is now known, that, in such intense cold, no glacier could have been formed. Heat is needed to cause such an accumulation of vapor from the ocean, that, when it congealed, it should settle down in these almost inconceivable masses. A wholly evil nature cannot sin, more than a wholly cold world can produce glaciers. There is needed within the nature a principle or a possibility of goodness to make sin possible.

If we leave our theories, and look at the world as it is we find good and evil side by side; we find even the germs of good and evil side by side, in every individual nature. Our problem is to understand the relation in which these two elements stand to one another.

When we look more closely, we find that all virtues stand in a certain connection with one another. Together, they form a perfect whole. Each is needed by all the rest for

their completeness; and each needs all the rest, or it is imperfect. We can conceive of an ideal man in which all virtues exist, each in its true proportion, and together form a beautiful and complete unity. This possible perfection and harmonious co-existence we see to be the plan after which human nature is shaped. This completed plan is what we strive to realize in our dreams, our romances, our loves and aspirations. We cannot conceive, as was just stated, of a being wholly evil. We can conceive, and cannot help conceiving, of a being wholly good. There is thus the trace of plan and system in the goodness, while the evil is only the imperfection and interruption of this ideal plan.

The question now meets us, Is this perfect nature, of which we can trace the imperfect and scattered elements, ruined or incomplete? When we see these scattered human virtues, of which no life is wholly destitute, and which, in spite of sin and wrong, ennoble the world, are we looking upon the ruins, the broken arches, the crumbling pillars, of a past perfection; or are we looking at the broad foundation and uprising columns of a perfection that is yet to be? According as we take one or the other of these views is our thought of humanity sad or hopeful. To many, the grand est exhibition of human virtue can be only sorrowful. It can remind them only of the greatness of their loss. If a fragment is so fair, what must have been the original magnificence? Not merely do they wander among ruins; these ruins are blasted by a curse. It was the bolt of the wrath of God that scattered the fair structure; and whatever remains, however beautiful at first sight, is yet scarred by the mark of his anger. To others, the virtues of human life have a grace and a joy that are not in themselves. They are not merely lovely: they are the prophecies of the grander loveliness that is to come. The world is to them

no ruin blasted and accursed. They see the city of God slowly forming itself out of the chaos; and they see, above all, the smile of God's blessing.

We can determine which of these theories is true, only by considering the arguments upon which they rest. The belief that human nature is a ruin, blasted by the curse of God, rests upon the story of the fall of man, as it is related in the book of Genesis, and supported by the traditions of other nations, that speak of a golden age in the distant past. What is the element of human nature, from which springs the tendency to this backward-looking glance, by which individuals, as well as races, turn so often with sad longing to their early years, we need not here inquire; neither is there a necessity for examining the authority of the passage in Genesis to which reference has been made. The incident of the speaking serpent, and of the formation of woman from a rib taken out of the side of Adam, would seem to remove this narration from the sphere of literal history. The name of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" — a tree which grows only in the gardens of the soul — would seem to imply that the story was not originally intended to be received as historic fact; while the yielding of Adam and Eve to the very first temptation would show that they could not have been originally very different from the weakest of their descendants. The Greek legend of Pandora is commonly related, as if Pandora brought, in a chest, to man, all the evils of life. The genuine legend was different. Man, it relates, had all the evils of life locked up in a box, from which they could not escape. Pandora persuaded him to lift the lid, and they came forth, and filled the earth with grief and terror. Such is the true conception of the fall of man, in contrast with the one commonly held. The heart of man was the sealed chest, which contained all sins and woes. Temptation could not

bring them. It could only persuade man to lift the fatal lid. The story of the fall has a sublime truth and significance; but its truth does not lie on the plane of history, and its significance does not concern the hard facts which mark the beginning of the development of the human race.

For the belief that human nature is not ruined, but incomplete, we have the unvaried testimony of history, so far as history has traced the course of human development. History is, indeed, and always will be, imperfect. It has not reached, and probably never will reach, the beginning of the life of man upon the earth. But, so far as it has penetrated backward, it has found itself tending towards the savage or barbarous state; and the earliest traces of human presence are the traces of savage or barbarous life. Even the book of Genesis, which describes the fair beginning of human history, shows traces of a preceding polytheism. Its very words, the words put into the mouth of the Creator himself, are half-converted heathen. The conception is monotheistic; but the language, "Let us make man in our image," is polytheistic. This is not the place for historic detail or discussion. I know the mystery which broods over the first life of man upon the earth. What agencies of creation or of elevation were at work, it is not for us, at present, to say. It is only a flippant conceit that can give unhesitating judgment. We can only say, that, so far as known facts can be laid hold of, the history of the human race has been a progressive one. We can take this for a certainty; while the assumption of a fall, from the effects of which this progress is a slow emerging, is purely hypothetical, and may be left out of the account, until we have some historical ground to sustain it.

If it be true, as history represents, that the race of man is progressing from a state of savage and barbarous

life to a life of love and knowledge, to the refinements of civilization, and to the inspiration of Christianity, we have a satisfactory solution of the great problem of the mingled good and evil in life. We should be prepared to find all the wrong and the violence that we do find. From half-civilized savages what more could we expect? The law of hereditary descent, which is elsewhere so powerful, cannot be disregarded here. We find even in our household pets traces of the wild life of their remote ancestors; and we must believe that only very slowly would the tendencies inwrought by ages of barbarous life be eliminated from the very structure of the race. Then, too, our habits of thought, our prejudices, our habits of feeling, our forms of government, our literature, our theologies, are all of the past. Each generation has its successor in its training, and it has been so from the beginning. Very slowly, then, can humanity have moved along its way. Moreover, as this elevation of the race, and of the individuals that compose it, depends upon a moral purpose; whenever this purpose is temporarily missing, there will be a lapse, a sliding-back, so that the ground won will have to be won over again. This is the disturbing effect of sin in human history, — of sin which is the close-following shadow of freedom.

It will be seen that this is no rose-colored view of human nature. It recognizes all its faults, its vices, its sins. It recognizes the hard selfishness which forms so great an element even in our most advanced society. But it recognizes also the virtues of humanity. It has a place for all the flashes of nobility and of self-sacrificing heroism, which have glorified, at however rare intervals, the history of every race. It has a place for those individuals who seem to us perfect, who are themselves the prophecies and the exemplars of the coming completeness of that common

nature of which they are partakers. It has a place for the scattered and often hidden beginnings and hints of a better nature, which we find even in the most depraved. Still more, it recognizes the royal claims and bearing of virtue, wherever it appears, and the homage which the lowest and the vilest pay to it. Virtue does not appear upon the earth as vanquished or dethroned. Its dignity is not traditional, due by courtesy to its past supremacy. Virtue, wherever it appears, feels itself young and strong, the heir of the world; and men recognize, by a certain instinctive prescience, the reality of its coming power.

We need hardly ask, whether the belief that human nature is a melancholy ruin of the past, or that it is indeed as yet incomplete, but sublime already with the grandeur of its coming perfection, falls in best with the tendencies and instincts of the present. The theory that human nature is a ruin might have been believed, indeed, among the corruptions that marked the period when the Roman Empire was tottering to its fall, and men fancied that the world itself was hastening to its end. It might be believed, perhaps, even now, in the old world, where tradition still controls the lives, if not the hearts, of men. It might be believed at other periods in the history of the world; but in this nineteenth century, in the midst of the untrammelled thought and the fresh springing life of this new world, such a doctrine can have neither place nor power. It lies athwart the course of all the ideas and principles which mark the present. Faith in man is the form, which, in the present age, faith in God pre-eminently takes. Men once fancied that they honored God by degrading, in their thought, the nature of man. Now men can find no better way of honoring God than by recognizing the traces of the reflection of his perfections, however faint and scattered, in the human soul. All the great movements of the present

rest on this faith in human nature. The world is slowly becoming democratic. In remote nations and in divers ways, we find, the principle of democracy is becoming more and more the ruling power. In this nation, it is fully recognized in theory, however imperfectly in fact, as the one central and fundamental principle; and democracy can have no other basis than faith in human nature. Even the church in America, which involves the most delicate and the loftiest relations of the soul, rests upon a popular basis. No matter what the professed belief of any church may be; when it throws itself, fully and unreservedly upon the people for its support, it shows that it has faith in the people, in those religious instincts which are its only firm foundation, in that love of the highest which seeks to embody itself in outward form and service.

This faith in human nature is not merely faith in what it is, but still more faith in what it is to be. The only basis of reform must be the belief, that what can now get a footing, however slight, will hereafter stand on a foundation which cannot be shaken. You leave your boat on the sloping beach, just where the ripples of the ebbing tide can lap, though they cannot float it. Do you not fear that it will be swept away? You know that the waves, which now just float about it, in a few moments will not reach it that they will sink away, and leave it every moment further inland. Such confidence do we have in whatever embodies the purest principles of right. If it can obtain a foothold, we are secure. The wrong and prejudice that threaten it, that almost sweep it from its foundation, we know will recede in an ebb that will be succeeded by no flood-tide, and leave it, not merely unmoved, but unthreatened.

The belief, that human nature is not ruined, although as yet incomplete, involves the fairest promise of the future. When we look backward only, we might feel proud of our

attainments: when we look forward, we are humbled. The mountain-side is not half scaled. When we look down, we grow giddy with the height that we have reached; but when we look up, and see the summit as far removed in appearance as if we had not begun to climb, our dizzy pride leaves us. The philanthropy, the science, the civilization, of the future will excel ours, as ours does the past. Compare Christianity with Christ, and you will see the difference between the Christianity of the present and that of the future.

The truth we are considering applies to the individual as well as to the race. The most sunken soul is not a hopeless ruin; the loftiest is not yet complete. Channing seems to us a perfect man. Yet Channing drew his strongest faith in immortality from the prophecy of completeness, contained in the unfinished plan even of his own being.

Who does not feel within himself like hints of what he might be, but is not? What character can we become familiar with, which does not give us hints of what it was meant to be, but is not yet? Even from what we see, we can guess at the ideal which that particular character is meant to reach. Or, when we cannot find this in ourselves and others, we find it in our thought of Jesus. It does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that we shall be like him. Let us, then, strive after the highest and the best. Let us take nothing less than Christ himself for our pattern; knowing, that, though our natures are imperfect, they are not deserted by the loving inspiration of God, and that we are meant to grow up, in all things, unto Him who is our Head.

IMMORTALITY, and Other Essays

By Charles Carroll Everett

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2; pages, 280; price, $1.20 *net;* postage, 11 cents.

THE late Dean of the Harvard Divinity School has given us many scholarly essays on religious and philosophical subjects. Dr. Everett's penetrating and analytical mind, with his ideas expressed in clear and simple yet finished style, lends to all his writings an interest and charm not always associated with the topics discussed. The two previous volumes of his essays have omitted considerable excellent material worthy of a more permanent form of preservation than the periodicals in which it appeared, and it is from this source that the following essays have been chosen for the contents of the present volume: "Immortality," "The Known and the Unknowable in Religion," "Mysticism," "The Gain of History," "The Faith of Science and the Science of Faith," "Joseph Priestley," "The Philosophy of the Sublime," "Spencer's Reconciliation of Science and Religion."

SPARK IN THE CLOD, THE

A Study in Evolution. By J. T. Sunderland

Size, 5 1-4 x 7 1-2 inches; pages, 230; price, 80 cents *net;* postage, 8 cents.

IN this examination into evolutionary processes and the effect of our modern knowledge of them upon our intellectual, moral, and religious conceptions, the author takes us back to the earth's formation, where the order of creation, so far as it is of human concern, begins. Then, after the lapse of ages, man and his evolution become visible parts of this world-process, involving the problems of pain and evil, of God and the soul and immortality. Rational application of accepted facts of science is made to the world of religious ideas, and the necessary modification in the old conceptions of things is clearly pointed out. Finally, regarding human destiny and the hope of immortality, the author reasons from what man has been to what, in the rationality of nature, he must be; for "all evolution is at once a history and a prophecy."

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

[No. 4]

LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY IN THE UNITED STATES

By

SAMUEL A. ELIOT, D.D.

An Address at the Second International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, Amsterdam, Holland

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BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY IN THE UNITED STATES.

The founders of the American Commonwealth were men who brought to the New World the best wisdom of the Old. The free State, the free Church, and the free School are the gifts to America of Puritan England and of the United States of the Netherlands. Spanish soldiers of fortune first landed on our southern shores, but left no permanent impression save of ruin and misery. The bold adventurers of France first explored the northern wilderness, and planted the fleur-de-lis on the rock of Quebec; but it is one of the most fortunate circumstances in human history that the colonization of the country was delayed until after the period of the Reformation, and especially until after the heroic struggle for liberty in the Netherlands and the rise of Puritanism in England. The planters of New England and New Netherlands were men trained in the principles of resistance alike to arbitrary civil power and to ecclesiastical authority. From that origin America derives its inheritance of complete religious toleration,— a principle not only embodied in the National Constitution, but established in all the habits and convictions of

the people. The creation and support of religious institutions in America is committed to the intelligence, energy, and good will of the people who voluntarily associate themselves for religious purposes. No government has either the will or the power to levy taxes for the support of churches, to prescribe systems of doctrine or forms of worship, to enforce discipline and uniformity. Every method of ecclesiastical organization and all forms of religious thought are represented among the hundred or more Christian denominations, but no one denomination contains more than a tenth of the population. All have equal privileges, but no church has any other right to exist than that it satisfies some longing of the human soul. As a rule, Christian ministers in America are judged just as other men are,— by their abilities, character, and public usefulness,— and our churches are valued for the inspiration and comfort which they afford to their adherents and for the service which they render to the community.

The dominant influence in American Christianity is Protestant, orthodox and evangelical. The most potent force in American life has been wielded by the descendants of those brave children of Calvin's spirit who vainly struggled for freedom of worship against English king and bishop, were nourished and taught in hospitable Leyden, and finally sailed prayerfully across the wintry sea to found a commonwealth upon the principle of equal rights. When the Mayflower Company landed, all knelt

together on the strand, and William Brewster prayed for God's blessing on their hazardous adventure. The answer to that prayer is to be read in the self-reliant congregations, schools, and colleges, in the self-governing communities that from the pine-clad Katahdin to the Golden Gate of the Pacific Sea gather millions of people into a church without a bishop and a state without a king.

I do not affirm that the Puritan conceived his own principles in their amplitude and final application. He was a man of the seventeenth century, not of the twentieth century. He meant to found a theocracy, but that brotherhood of equal rights we call democracy was in the inexorable though unconscious logic of his creed. "By their fruits," we read, not by their roots, "shall ye know them." In the chill April days, under the matted leaves of the Plymouth woods, you will find masses of tough and fibrous roots. The flower that springs from them is the sweetest of the year. The root is hard and rough, but the blossom is the mayflower. The root of Puritanism was a harsh theology, but the flower was civil and religious liberty. The blood of New England flows to-day in the veins of every state, and largely determines the character of American institutions. As on this autumn day the fresh sea wind blowing from the New England shore breathes health into many an inland valley, so the penetrating influence of the Puritan principle has been felt in every part and crisis of the nation's life.

I do not need to say that the original Calvinism of the Puritan churches has been profoundly modified, not only by the influences which are common to all civilized lands, but also by the special political theories and habits of the American people, and by the social conditions of new and rapidly growing communities. No religious body in America is precisely like the denomination which may bear the same name and acknowledge the same confession in Europe. In New England itself Calvinism has disappeared. The original churches of the Pilgrims and Puritans are almost all Unitarian in faith and fellowship, while the so-called Orthodox churches are almost equally liberal in theology and flexible in organization. The prevailing Protestantism of the Middle and Western States is increasingly broad and catholic. Each one of the great Protestant denominations has been rent with schism. The Methodists are split into a dozen different bodies, the Baptists into as many more. The Cumberland Presbyterians represent a revolt from the Calvinism of the old-school Presbyterians; the reformed Episcopalians, a revolt from certain rubrics and phrases of the Prayer Book; the Protestant Methodists, a revolt from the Episcopate; the Unitarians, a revolt from the tritheism and dreadful teaching of human depravity which characterized eighteenth-century Congregationalism. In each and every case the main body, instead of reverting to bigotry by the expulsion of its more progressive elements, has girded up its loins, and followed hard after its own

heretics. It is safe to say that the Unitarian schism in the Congregational churches, inevitable a century ago, would be impossible to-day. The Presbyterian Church has just succeeded in enacting certain radical amendments to the Westminster Confession. The Methodist and Episcopal Churches witness a steady decrease in the power of their bishops. The preaching in all Protestant pulpits becomes less and less doctrinal and more practical. Steadily in that conflict which Carlyle called "the struggle of men intent on the real essence of things against men intent on the forms and semblances of things" the victory tends to the side of those whose trust is in the light of reality. With increase of knowledge and the pressure of social problems the emphasis of the doctrinal teaching changes from the sovereignty of God to the Fatherhood of God, from the privileges of the elect to the rights of the brotherhood of man. The higher criticism of the Bible is taught in all but one of the Protestant theological schools of the Northern States. The study of the ethics of social questions more and more takes equal rank in the education of ministers with the study of theology. Conversion in most Protestant communions has come to mean nothing more than a decision to seek the truth and do the good. Regeneration has come to be regarded as a process of spiritual education, salvation as "a growth out of selfishness into service." As to future destiny, the prevalent teaching of the Protestant Church is either a frank Universalism or a non-committal statement which looks

any way except toward the old stern belief in endless punishment.

While these churches have thus gained immensely — and still are growing — in breadth of view, in humane sympathies, and in self-government, it may be questioned if they have also gained in ethical spiritual vitality. It may reasonably be doubted if the present ministers and members of the orthodox churches are equal in loyalty to truth and in the spirit of self-sacrifice to the men and women whose convictions were shaped by a severer creed and whose characters were disciplined in a more rigorous social and religious climate. The grave peril that confronts the orthodox churches to-day is that of insincere conformity. It would be easy to point out the scholarly deficiencies and the discrepancies between creed and practice. It would be easy to show the serious difficulties in which the professedly orthodox ministers and churches find themselves when they try to make new wine stay in their old bottles, to harmonize antiquated formulas and modern knowledge, to make seventeenth-century phrases express twentieth-century ideas; but to assail a great religious party just when it is struggling to adapt itself to higher truths and larger usefulness is too ungenerous a task. Let it suffice that the prevailing forces in orthodox Protestantism are generally liberal, tending to purify doctrinal systems, to popularize church government, and to elevate righteousness of life above dogmatic accuracy of belief.

Besides the dominant Evangelical Protestantism two other important influences work in American religious life,— on the one hand the Roman Catholic Church and on the other hand the independent churches or fellowships which avowedly represent liberal Christianity. The Church of Rome has had a wonderful career in the United States. When the American government was established, the adherents of the Roman see were numbered as the least of the sectaries: they now constitute the largest single denomination. No stronger testimony to the power and discipline of the Roman order can be discovered than the rapid and thorough way in which, with slender resources, parishes and schools have been organized and equipped. The achievement of the Catholic Church in receiving and caring for the great masses of emigrants of diverse nationalities and tongues has been an exhibition of incomparable administrative ability. The unconscious action and reaction between Catholics and Protestants in America has been healthy. The Catholics have taught the Protestants how to study the infinite varieties of human nature, how to have compassion on the multitude, and how to call noble music to the aid of devotion. They have shown us the folly of taking away their playthings from spiritual children and of permitting the devil to have all the good tunes. They have helped to mitigate the dulness of the Calvinistic Sabbath and to glorify social enjoyment and good cheer. Above all, they have defended the clinging love that refuses to be-

lieve in any great gulf set between our souls and the beloved dead. They have wisely interpreted the deep instinct of the human heart which believes in the communion of saints. The mediæval elements in Catholic creed and worship have been profoundly modified by contact with democratic conditions. The Roman Church in America differs materially from the Roman Church of Italy, Spain, or Belgium. At first almost exclusively a foreign church, both in priesthood and in laity, it more and more takes its normal place as a permanent element in American life. The priesthood is now chiefly recruited from American-born youth who receive their training in their native land and who are generally as ardently patriotic as the sons of Pilgrims themselves.

The Roman Church has indeed at times been found in opposition to the American school system, and its priests have occasionally dabbled injudiciously in politics; but it is almost always to be found a stout fighter for temperance and for economy in public administration. It is divided from Protestantism by fundamental intellectual disagreements, but American Protestants must gratefully recognize that for a great mass of their fellow-citizens the Catholic Church performs a service which no Protestant church is fitted to render. For those who have little power to think for themselves a church that can teach them how to obey is indispensable. The Roman discipline often unfolds a saintliness that may well bow our hearts in respect.

If it upholds a doctrine of the priesthood and the sacraments which obscures the light of the Christian gospel, if it grossly carnalizes religion, its very bigotry is exercised in a cause in which all Christians are enlisted. The earnest Catholic holds to his sacramental theories, because he believes that through the mass the eternal life of God can be made the actual possession of men. If we have anther way to God, let us not fail to recognize that, though by different paths, we are "urged by one great motive to the same great end."

At the other extreme from Roman Catholicism are the free and independent churches that are fearless in their devotion to truth, and whose chief interest lies, not in doctrines or ceremonies, but in the worship of the heart and in the cultivation of the life of integrity, purity, and public serviceableness. The liberal forces in American Christianity are not confined to any one denomination or group of churches. They appear sporadically, but unmistakably, in all the churches, even in the great ecclesiastical corporations themselves. The liberal communion is the fellowship of all those who are intellectually hospitable, who do not fear that investigation can discover any poverty in God, who assign the seat of authority in religion neither to infallible church nor infallible book, but to the reason and spiritual capacity of man. The liberal forces have found their largest scope in the churches that are congregational in polity. I should not, however, fail to testify that the gospel of the Inner

Light, to which the Society of Friends has borne brave and quiet testimony, has been not the least of the liberalizing tendencies as well as one of the purest moral influences in America. The sweetness of domestic life, the promotion of peace and all progressive social reforms, owe an incalculable debt to the Quaker. I should also bear witness to the ethical contribution which Reformed Judaism — proportionally, the wealthiest religious communion in America — has made to the national life. The Reformed Jews have set high standards of education and family devotion, and they have set in motion the wisest and most thorough systems of charity. The recent development of the movement most inaccurately entitled Christian Science has been, on the whole, beneficial. It is entangled in a deplorable charlatanism and involved in most unscientific practices; but its fundamental philosophy, when cleared from the fog of verbiage, is found to be sane and broad, so that its general influence is undeniably wholesome. The simplicity of the gospel of Christ is, however, best represented by the fellowships called Unitarian and Universalist, a little company of perhaps a quarter of a million people gathered into some thousand independent congregations, with their chief strength in New England, but well represented in all the Northern and Pacific States, and sparsely in the Southern States.

These free churches find their justification for being in no passion for dissent or freak of wilfulness. They are the natural product of the good

soil of Protestantism, and represent the Puritan principle in its highest development. Their distinctive teaching is the assertion that the finite spirit may hold communion with the infinite Spirit without any mediation. The free churches build upon the faith that God is manifest in human life. They do not seek to make ends of themselves, but to provide the means of quickening the higher feelings and faculties. They seek to guide life in clean and honest ways, and to consecrate intellectual and material resources to the glory of God by securing them to wise human uses. They preserve Christianity from being narrowed by priestly or scholastic interpretations. They refuse to allow religion to separate itself from other human interests. They collect the best wisdom of all lands and times, and with it feed the altar fires of the living God. I do not say that they have attained their ideal, but toward that ideal they tend, mightily assured that, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty,"— not the false liberty which means lawlessness and breeds chaos, but the liberty of sonship, of service, and of growth.

The free churches disarm certain natural prejudices against religion by allying it with common sense, with the best instincts of the heart, and with the happy service of the brotherhood of man. They set forth a religion for daily life, and believe in the educational value of happiness. They hold to the naturalness of Christianity. They take for granted the divine life and longing in the hearts of

men and women, and seek to quicken it by association and common work and worship. Their force is as that of a stream flowing from a mountain height, which is feeble in origin, which may be here delayed and there for a moment diverted, now vexed with rapids and then calm in monotony, which takes to itself tributary streams and is refreshed by their brightness, which turns the busy wheels of human activity, and finally finds its expanded power in the great eternal sea.

More and more these free churches, whatever their name or denominational allegiance, are coming into conscious sympathy and co-operation. There are diversities of gift among them, but the same spirit. There are differences of emphasis and operation, but their intellectual agreements and spiritual affinities are increasingly manifest. They are urged to unity by outward pressure as well as by inward attraction. Sacerdotalism and materialism are arrogant foes that beset them on either hand. Of the prevalence of the commercial and secular spirit I need say little. Such as it is, it makes itself sufficiently apparent to the most superficial observer of American life. Americans sometimes appear to be engrossed in trade and money-making, but it will not do to take this aspect of American life too seriously. Materialism comes up against the citadels of Christian theism with the noise and boast and flaunting array of Sennacherib against the cities of Judah, and sometimes, in these days of our amazing commercial activity, it seems

as if "Prosperity" were deified and the eyes of the people were dazzled by the new glory, and their hearts won by the invader's promise of riches and empire; but already, as to the Assyrian of old, is the word of the prophet being fulfilled,—"By the way that he came up, by the same way shall he return." There is no permanent peril to the deeper life of the people in the gusts of commercial passion that sweep periodically across the marts of trade. The soil that to-day brings forth the largest crop of weeds will perhaps to-morrow bear the richest spiritual harvest.

Sacerdotalism is a more unnatural phenomenon in American life. Its power is small, but its pretensions are great. In the Protestant Episcopal Church it is constantly growing in influence. It appears to furnish a religious home for some devout and submissive souls who need in their religious life the crutch of stated observances. It commends itself by the self-sacrificing though often injudicious labors of its priestly adherents in behalf of the poor of the cities. But its piety lacks the quality of robust manliness. It deifies correctness of speech and attitude, and represses individuality. It is fundamentally in opposition to the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. It interposes semi-magical mediators between the Father God and those who ought to be his fearless children. It really belongs within the fold of the Roman Church, of which it is a mutilated copy. It cannot but prove to be a temporary reaction against

the prevailing liberalizing tendencies that characterize American Christianity.

What are the facts which justify a confidence that the free churches represent the type of Christian thought and organization that will prevail in America? I leave out, for want of time, the influences which are everywhere at work,— the time spirit, the spread of democratic institutions, the growth of the scientific habit of mind. Let me speak only of the influences that have peculiar potency in the United States.

1. I mention first the absence of all legal and statutory barriers. Under the practice of universal toleration there is absolute freedom to grow and expand. The social ostracism of dissenters is unknown in America save in immature communities. The liberal churches have only to overcome the opposition of orthodox prejudice or misunderstanding. If they fail in this new century to lead the intellectual and spiritual life of the nation, it will be becanse of their own inertness and unworthiness, because they have been "disobedient to the heavenly vision."

2. I mention the fact that the Congregational polity of church government is best adapted to the political and social life of a republic. The great ecclesiastical corporations, whether Catholic or Protestant, are at great initial disadvantage. All American institutions require constant readjustment to the changing needs and beliefs of a mobile people. A dogmatic system that admits of no reform

is an anachronism in a democracy. It is only a free church that breathes naturally in the atmosphere of a free state. The two grew up together, and are still interdependent. Further, any church that endeavors to transplant to America class distinctions or clerical pretensions is an alien in a land where every man carries his sovereignty under his own hat. The Roman, Anglican, and Lutheran communions all suffer from this handicap; while the independent churches which are governed by their own local constituencies, which determine their own covenants and choose their own ministers, find themselves in accord with their environment and close to the national heart. The Church that is self-reliant in administration, elastic in doctrinal system, that founds its ministry not on any fiction of apostolic succession, but on sincere and Christian manhood, that describes itself as a company of the disciples of Jesus Christ united for the worship of God and the service of men,—that Church will possess the future if it is faithful to its opportunity.

3. I venture to say that American family life has a quality of tender devotion and considerate courtesy which is not indeed unknown elsewhere, but which is pervasive in America. The relations of husband and wife and of parents and children are generally just and gentle. The moral standards that guide family life are Puritanic in origin, and retain their potency; but the Puritan severity has entirely disappeared from the family discipline. It has been supplanted by a freedom and a demonstra-

tive good will which sometimes seems slack to critics of sterner mood. Now the Christian life is much more a matter of the heart than of the head. Its root and type are in family love. The growth of tenderness and justice in domestic life cannot fail to make American Christianity equally just and kind and brotherly.

4. There are some traits of character that are conspicuously American, and which contribute to the overthrow of false ideas about religion and the spread of ideas, which are, indeed, as old in theory and utterance as the Christian gospel, but which are new in realization. They are, moreover, like all the special influences I have mentioned, the possession of women as well as men. The characteristic American love of humor and power of ridicule helps to bring all infallibilities to their doom. Many of the old errors are more readily laughed out of court than argued out. Dogmatic certainties and ecclesiastical arrogance are the easy victims of a pointed joke. All inflated claims and pretensions are quickly punctured by the needle point of wit. The good spirit of laughter is on the liberal side.

Again, the American is naturally an optimist. His temperament and his experience alike persuade him to look on the bright side of things. His instincts favor belief in a cheerful and humane form of religion. The American has not the Scotchman's love for gloomy theological speculation, or the German's scholarly patience and industry, or the Frenchman's vivacious imagination. He pays alle-

giance to a religion that does something, and does it quickly and efficiently. Again, he is not averse to novelties. He approaches new ideas with a cheerful confidence such as no other people exhibit. Many highly cultivated people in Europe are temperamentally conservative, and the persistence of established churches and conventional usages and outgrown dogmas is due to the fact that the best people are opposed to changes of which it is impossible to foretell the outcome; but for us Americans so many new experiences have proved to be fortunate experiences that we are not disposed to regard novelties with distrust. Our continent is new, and has proved marvellously rich. Our laws are novel, and have promoted human welfare and happiness. Our political machinery is an experiment, and it works well. Our people have pushed into unexplored territories, and made them the abode of happy millions. The untried is therefore to us desirable rather than suspicious. A confident expectation of good charac terizes the American, and qualifies him to receive and adopt happier faiths and larger hopes.

5. The brief but already historic record of the free churches commends them to popular approval. Their just pride is in the type of character they produce and in the men and women they have developed for the public service. The temperament which makes a man an independent in his religious thinking is usually the temperament which makes a man a leader in any occupation to which he gives himself. To an unparalleled degree the men and

women trained in the fellowship of the free churches have served the cause of education, of philanthropy and reform, of literature, art, and science. I will not weary you with the recitation of the deeds of these men and women, I will not read the long lists of distinguished names. They are known of all who read American history. Suffice it that the fruits of liberal Christianity are plentiful and good and that the forms of faith and government practised by the free churches have proved their capacity to produce America's chosen leaders in almost every walk of life.

It is not for me in this presence to glorify these churches that I love, or that dear land of which they are the flower and pledge of spiritual harvest. I do not ask your praise for them; but I do ask you for your confidence, your co-operation, and your prayers of affectionate good will. May I not ask that the brethren who are bound with us in the control of the law of liberty, whatever their name or nationality or tongue, will pray for a blessing on their comrades far across the sea,—on the quiet homes wherein the new generation is being trained in simplicity and righteousness; on the congregations which after the way men call heresy worship the God of their fathers; on their unconstrained religious life; on their eager search for truth,—that these churches may justify their noblest hopes, and prove fit channels for the inspiration of the living God, declaring his messages, transmitting his healing ministries, entering into his abundant life, and rejoicing in his never-failing love.

[No. 5]

RATIONAL RELIGION THE WANT OF THE WORLD

BY

REV. JOSEPH MAY

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

RATIONAL RELIGION — THE WANT OF THE WORLD.

BY REV. JOSEPH MAY.

"Other men labored, and ye have entered into their labors."—JOHN iv. 38.

It is a law of human life that each generation, by the diligence and fulness of its works, should prepare the way, and help to make glad and fruitful the labors of its successors. That you and I should gather up the best that was in the lives and labors of our predecessors, and dedicate it, with all our own best powers and all our means of usefulness, to the one great cause of truth, of God's service as it presents itself to us to-day,—this is the sacred duty which the whole nature of human life imposes on us. Let it not seem a *burthen* laid upon our shoulders. Let it be to us our precious privilege,—the thing that gives meaning, dignity, and truest joy to our lives.

More and more clearly, as my own life matures, I see that the only true interpretation of life is that of Jesus,—as a *stewardship*, a career of co-operative labor with God himself; that all the force which is in man should be applied, as the infinite forces of Deity are wholly applied, to the evolution throughout the realm of being of the great truths which are eternal, by the realization of which in human character, human progress and the ultimate perfection of our natures are to be achieved. This is the

high, spiritual conception for which the Unitarian Church stands.

The question I would put to you to-day, with all the solemnity I can possibly give to it, is this, Do you appreciate, do you *justly* appreciate, the importance of our cause, the responsibility which rests on you and me to make and keep our Church, to the utmost of our power, the effective force for truth it is capable of being? If you do, then its future is secure, to be of fruitage rich and rewarding. There is no service you will not be prompt to render it, there is no sacrifice you will not be ready and eager to offer, to make and keep it vigorous, fresh, ever full of new life, effective and happy.

If you do *not* (and perhaps you do not fully) appreciate what an organization is, of which the meaning, aim, and possibilities are such as ours, then I earnestly entreat you give to it now renewed reflection; distinguish and freshly weigh its principles, observe the profound contrast they offer to those of every other branch of the Church. Weigh these things, I say, as honest, earnest men and women, consider them in the light of unselfish duty; and, if you are convinced, by such a survey, of the importance to the world of an organization based on the principles and standing for the truths which we recognize and proclaim, then I am sure you will make no grudging response to the call made upon your consciences.

For my own part, friends, I say, deliberately and earnestly, that I think there is *no* public responsibility appealing to you and me which compares in importance with that of our maintaining our church in vigorous life. There are other moral instrumentalities which call forcibly upon us: there are charities which tenderly affect our sympathies; and we ought, as we are able, to do our

duty by all. But whereas a great deal of the good work we are held to do is, in its nature, mundane, of temporary effect, to cure particular ills, to meet exigencies which are only passing, the work of *this* institution is radical, fundamental, essential. To relieve physical suffering; to improve outward conditions; to mitigate poverty; to promote health, education, art, morality,—all these things are of our duty, and are rewarding and delightful. But all the philanthropic work of the world, all the moral work of the world, its whole developing civilization, depend on *truth*. Only as the world gains *truth* — truth of thought, truth of aim, truth of spirit — does it, on any side whatever, progress to better things. The thoughts of men mould and inspire their actions. Their principles shape their lives. Make thoughts and principles elevated, unselfish, pure, noble, true, and human life will ascend to ever new forms of vigor and beauty and fruitfulness.

It is this function that every true church discharges. I do not say ours alone. Wherever men are sincere in their religious aims and efforts, true to their highest light, the cause of truth will be subserved. At least the *spirit* of truth must needs go forth from every heart that is, in aim and intention, true. But, certainly, our church is *peculiar* in the service it stands to render to society. Were all other churches dedicated to the same function, our responsibility might be less critical. Because we stand almost *alone* in the character of the work we do for truth, that responsibility is increased a hundred-fold. I think we ought to feel that, by God's providence, there is given to us, in our organized capacity, and as individuals who recognize the principles we undertake to promote, a function positively *sacred* in its quality. I do

not know what you could say of a man's office and aim higher than this,—that he was dedicated to the cause of RATIONAL RELIGION.

Rational religion! Surely, I do not need now to delay long in interpreting the phrase. Rational religion is simply religion conceived according to reason; attained by the use of our reason, in which the mind of God is reflected in the mind of man; amenable to reason — that is subject, finally, to no authority but the mind and conscience of each individual, acting freely, because only when acting in perfect freedom can any of the conclusions of our minds be just and true. Rational religion is, therefore, religion free, personal, positive, practical, the testimony of our faith, the natural product of all our best intuitions, experiences, observations, reflections, studies. It uses every help which consideration of the thoughts of others, the study of human history and of every science, may furnish it. It reverently appropriates whatever it finds true, wherever it finds it. But it rejects the claim of any pretended authority, of church, council, book, creed, to *override* the sincere convictions of the private mind. The only revelation of truth is the divine impression which it makes on each private heart. Perfect freedom of mental action is its necessary condition. The condition of your attaining more truth than to-day you have is your mental and moral fidelity to what you, this day, see and feel to be true. It is a wrong to any mind that any other should attempt to impose on it conclusions to which it does not itself arrive by the normal, sincere, thoughtful use of its own powers, of the experiences it has had, the observations and reflections it faithfully makes. *Only* in this way can one's mind genuinely progress in the knowledge of truth. The least

faint, feeble, wavering impression of truth, which comes to you normally, genuinely, may be the beginning of a whole volume of spiritual revelation, awakening, reviving, upbuilding, your spiritual life. Be true to it, cultivate the springing germ of faith and insight, follow the lead of the flickering ray which shines into your heart, accept the *spirit* of truth, and give it way in your heart; and, as Jesus promised his hearers, it shall surely lead you into all truth.

This is the *method* of rational religion. "Reason in religion," says a recent inspiring writer, "does not mean reasoning about religion," although that we do, "but reason so permeating religion that nothing untrue can be held sacred, nothing brutal can be called divine, nothing unworthy of reverence can be worshipped. Reason in religion means the consecration of the whole *mind*, as well as the whole heart, to the cause of God and man."

Now the established method of religious culture, as practised in the whole body of the Christian Church, is, in its principles, *exactly opposed* to all this. It sets out with the *denial* of the right and duty of the private mind thus freely, individually, normally, and truly, to proceed in the attainment of religious truth. Its foundation postulate is that all truth has been given to man, in express outward statement, and is to be accepted in that form, as the Church prescribes it. It declares the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures (irrespectively of the obviously varying value, and often discordant quality, of their contents) to be, in literal form, the comprehensive summary of religious truth, verbally revealed by God, and superior to human scrutiny and criticism. It offers you a compendium of essential truth in its creeds. It insists on the acceptance of those creeds, whether or no their con-

tents appeal to your judgment and conscience. It thus *enchains* the mind at the outset. It *denies it* the free action which is the only true mental action. It *interposes itself* between the mind and truth, between the soul and God. It does not merely assist, as each of us may do, and should, the other: it asserts a title to *control*. Even were its conclusions sound, this method of religious culture would still be false and wrong. Vital religion can only be attained by normal, vital processes. The truth of God himself which shall be imposed on the mind by authority (*i.e.*, by compulsion), can only be formal, not vital. It is not the result of *genuine* processes of thought and feeling. It cannot do the work of vital truth in the soul.

There is much sincere and beautiful religion, no doubt, in the hearts of men and women about us. But, mark you, *it is not the result of the acceptance of authoritative teaching*. It is in defiance of that teaching. It is outside of all compulsory culture. It is the sweet result of the natural activities of the mind and spirit, which cannot — in these days, certainly — be wholly restrained. But these natural activities may be sadly *interfered* with, repressed, and distorted. And, worst of all, the method of authority tempts the private mind to rest in a mere formal acquiescence in the modes of thought enforced upon it. Distrusting itself, encouraged to suppose that all truth has been attained and is formulated in the creeds, it sinks into an apathetic acquiescence in the things taught it, and is discouraged from the vital, active, genuine effort to attain truth,— truth, not of opinion merely, but truth of spirit, truth of aim and endeavor, out of which alone real spiritual life can be developed.

This is the actual condition of the religious world about us,—of the world of good and earnest people, who are willing to be religious, who are religious in spirit, but on whom church discipline, the authority of creed and dogma, hang as a heavy millstone to hinder them in the genuine development of their spiritual natures. We cannot, surely, undervalue the injurious results of the popular methods of religious culture in this respect. A thousand obvious evils flow from it. Religion is made a *formal* thing, to which it is enough to render outward assent. So it loses the vital power which the appeal of true religion—religion personal, rational, natural—would exert. The religious life remains itself formal, superficial, wanting in inspiration, in moral power, in the awakening, energizing force, of which true religion is the fountain.

We see this in the moral condition of Christian peoples. It is certain that their religion does not enter practically into life. If it did, how, then, could all the evils of life remain so flagrant? Grant all the power of self, sense, worldliness, passion, all the effects of indifference, spiritual ignorance, and deadness of heart, yet, if all the *seeming* religion of the world were *real* religion, if all the professors of religion were animated, alive, eager, with the spirit of religion working positively, freely, practically in their hearts, I declare that the evils of life must wonderfully yield to the pressure of truth, of faith, of holy purpose, which *could not but* issue from the presence of free, rational, individual religious conviction and feeling in the millions of hearts which now formally profess it, but which, through the evil effects of a vicious method of religious culture, have been withheld from the development of a true religious life.

We see a like result in the *apathy* of the masses towards religious truth. Hidden from them, debarred from them, by the method of authority in religion; they, offended by the absurdities of what is proffered them as religious truth, dissuaded from that personal quest of truth to which we are all called in nature, turn their backs altogether upon religion, and drift into pure neglect of the most important interest, the only real interest, of the human career.

We see a similar result of false religious culture in the *unrest* of myriad souls, who crave to be religious, but cannot accept what is offered to them as religion; in the dubious position which so many of the popular religious leaders visibly occupy, who have really outgrown their own creeds, yet are so crippled in the action of their minds so hampered by selfish considerations,— the dread of unpopularity, the fear of censure, and of worldly inconvenience,— that they are true neither to what they profess of the popular creeds, nor to the genuine instincts of their own souls, calling them to independence, to the rejection of dogmas they no longer truly believe, to the proclamation of the religion which is true, because the reflection of the actual workings of their minds.

There are such men all about us in the very pulpits of the churches; men liberal in spirit; who have caught some gleam of the real truth; who cannot wholly blind themselves to the results of scholarship and science; who really feel the unsoundness of their positions; who long for spiritual freedom, long to throw off the shackles of creeds and church discipline, but are not strong enough; have not the courage to meet opposition and worldly loss; are not quite clear enough in these deeper convictions to enable them to come out, rejecting their

false positions, and becoming the leaders of the people in a purified thought, in a free, rational, and fruitful religious life.

If we Unitarians are thoughtful, if we are sincere, if we are earnest, we cannot be indifferent to the religious phenomena of the present hour.

Never was the work of an organization like the Unitarian Church, based upon the positive recognition of the vital reality of religious truth, the recognition of God, of the spiritual nature of human life, but presenting to the private soul only the call of the spiritual nature for personal self-culture more important; never was the demand of any hour more exigent,— and, let me add, more encouraging and hopeful,— for the presentation of RATIONAL RELIGION, religion perfectly free, the normal product of individual conviction, vital, and therefore forever progressive in the paths of God's spiritual leading.

I say, then, again, no work could possibly be, at this time, more precious, more beneficial to the world, more rewarding to its willing servant. As things actually are, none is equally or comparably pressing upon you and me. It is our peculiar service: it is our supreme responsibility. It is comprehensive of all good work. To set free the minds and hearts of our generation; to open to them the glad liberty of the sons of God; to make them see the beauty of true religion; to infuse into our time the true spirit of religion,— ah! nothing you can possibly do in any other channel can be so important, so rewarding as this.

Every church has two functions: one,— sweetest, doubtless, to our private hearts,— to minister by its services, by the faith of each strengthening the faith of all, and all of each, to the spiritual life of its own people. Remember

that the responsibility for even *this* rests, above all, upon the people. The minister can do but a part of it. The faith you bring to your church; the diligence you are willing to give to enhance the common spiritual life; even the regularity of your outward presence on the occasions of meeting for worship and reflection, — these are the prime conditions of the life, the joy, the utility, of a church.

But each church has also the *other* function, of promoting the spread of truth in the world. According to its relation to the public mind is the *emphasis* of either function relative to the other. Most obviously, then, is that second function commandingly important and pressing. It ought to command your utterly unreserved, unresting self-consecration. You ought to be willing for every generous service you can render to such a cause, for every sacrifice it can possibly call you to.

In a succinct statement, what you want to see and acknowledge is exactly this: An *organization based upon our principles, standing for the truth we see, and in presence of the actual religious condition by which we are confronted, is essentially a missionary enterprise. In any part of our country to-day — and so it long will be — a Unitarian church is a missionary church.* Its work is a missionary work. It cannot — certainly, it cannot usually — be sustained on the principles of a business enterprise, of which you limit the range according to its cost and profits. It is like every generous agency for reform, in morals, politics, social life, which those who feel the importance of some great truth sustain at all cost to themselves, to promote that truth. Effectively, — in spirit, if not in mere business methods, — a true Unitarian church is a *free* church, because it exists to *give* truth to those

whom it can reach. The condition of its life and action is not in the response of the community to its offered service: this may come slowly and sparsely. Its life, its strength, its effectiveness, are in the devotion of its members to the unselfish work of offering its truth to every willing heart as freely and largely as it is in their power to do.

This privilege and duty is placed upon us by Providence; by the spirit of truth which has worked, through God's grace, in our own minds; which has set them free, which reveals to us the true conditions of spiritual culture, in which the religious world is so far astray,—in a word, which has placed precious truth in our hands, which we rejoice in for ourselves, and which it is for us to say whether we will generously give to the world or will niggardly withhold. "Other men have labored, and we have entered into their labors." We may accept our responsibility, and be blessed. We may decline it, or halt in it, and make our account with God. But the men and women on whom his light has shined; who recognize the truth that religion is the supreme, pervasive interest of human life; who recognize, secondly, that religion is only true, vital, of full efficient power, when it is free, when it is rational, when it is positive and personal; who see that the popular religious cultus of to-day is a burthen, heavy to be borne, still resting, like an incubus, on the spiritual life of our generation,—these men and women are called of God, as truly as were Jesus and his twelve apostles, to *give* true religion to the world.

The professional ministers of religion may do much, indeed. God grant them all a perfect zeal in all their work. Give us, O God, who are selected for the high office of uttering thy truth, of leading thy people in the way of truth,

all faith, all earnestness, the spirit of consecration, the spirit of sacrifice, that not on us shall rest the shame of infidelity to our holy stewardship! But may God grant also to our *people* everywhere the vision, the responsive ardor, the willingness to do, to spend and be spent, in the same common service of his cause!

Are you and I, dear friends, worthy of our spiritual progenitors? Are we willing to take newly up their work of service? Are we willing to bear the cross which our present apostolate lays upon us? Ah! a light and easy cross it is, compared to that which myriads of true hearts have gladly borne for God's truth!

Scrutinize your hearts, I entreat you, this day! Consider your heritage,— your heritage of truth, your heritage of responsibility. Consider what talents God has placed in your keeping. What power of thought have you? What power of faithful speech? What power of worldly wealth, potent for every practical cause, has the bountiful Giver of every good gift placed in your hands? Are you willing to use those talents for God's cause? Will you use them for his cause? Or will you bury them in the earth,— in the soil of self-regarding lives,— wrapt in the napkin of self-indulgence, of worldly ease, of spiritual apathy?

Ah! dear friends, I will not distrust your answer, if of your hearts you faithfully inquire.

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[No. 6]

BAPTISM.

BY

REV. L. J. LIVERMORE.

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and wpward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christanity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

BAPTISM.

BY REV. L. J. LIVERMORE.

THE purpose of this article is to state, in a very summary form, what we suppose to be the prevailing views among us on the subject of Baptism, touching only on the leading points of evidence sufficiently to make clear the nature of our faith.

The practice of baptism, as a symbol of moral purpose and religious conviction, is supposed to have originated from the use of water in bathing, and as a means of ceremonial cleanness. It is believed to have been customary to baptize converts to Judaism, as one step in their initiation into the privileges of the Jewish Church. That it was a rite already in use among the Jews, and with a somewhat definite religious signification, appears from the way in which John is said to have come baptizing, without any thing to intimate or suggest that it was a novelty originated by him. The same is also indicated by Christ's words to Nicodemus, in John, third chapter, fifth verse; for, if Nicodemus had not already been used to this form, such an answer would not have been intelligible to him. Christ alludes to the rite as something his hearer would understand. Baptism was a symbol peculiarly intelligible and

expressive to the people of a warm climate, where water was comparatively scarce, and its use indispensable almost equally for health and comfort.

When John came preaching in the remoter country regions of Judea, — conscious of a religious inspiration and mission, and looking for the speedy appearing of the Redeemer, — he found this symbol of moral and religious renewal already familiar to the people. It was well adapted to give point and permanence to the religious feelings he awakened. It defined the nature and purpose of his call to them, in a clearer and more effective way than verbal statements alone could do it. John's baptism is sometimes spoken of as the baptism of or to repentance; but this does not carry the inference that the symbolic meaning of the rite, as he used it, was penitence. The symbol had reference to the purer life which was to follow. It was not a confession of past sins, but a pledge of future piety and righteousness. Only as such could Jesus have received the rite. It was in him the formal recognition of John's right to preach of the truth which he proclaimed, and a type of his own consecration to a holy life. For others, it was a baptism of repentance, because the sinful can only come to righteousness through repentance. Reformation is to them the condition of subsequent holiness of life. John's baptism was also called the baptism of repentance, because he enjoined this as the means of grace; while Christian baptism was associated with higher views of the divine presence and help.

The same reasons which made this rite suitable for John's purposes commended it to Jesus. Almost as soon as he began to have disciples, the disciples began to baptize. There is no reason to doubt this baptism was in the name of Jesus; that is, it implied a receiving of him so far as his work was then manifest. When the Lord's earthly

task was completed, he left this to his disciples as the plainest outward sign of faith in him. Its meaning to the Christian convert lay not in any implied confession of past sins, or any supposed power in the rite to make him clean. It was his formal reception of a new teacher, and a new life, — a life of moral purity and of religious consecration. By receiving baptism in the name of Jesus, he signified that the purer life to which he pledged himself was made to appear to him his duty through the teachings of Christ; that he believed in Jesus as one sent from God, as his Lord and Master; and, because believing so, that he took on himself the duty of living according to the commands of Jesus. The ordinance carried with itself a meaning varying according to each convert's measure of Christian faith and understanding. It stood for his pledge of faith and duty, and was equally the symbol of his participation in the grace and privileges of the gospel.

Baptism came to be an ordinance of the Christian Church, not because of any essential value in itself, — not because Jesus Christ saw in it, of itself, any spiritual value, — but as a form or symbol, the meaning of which was already familiar to those around him, and therefore well adapted to serve as an expressive, intelligible, and visible sign and confession of faith in him as the Teacher and Redeemer of men. There is no proof that Jesus regarded the rite as an indispensable condition of salvation, or of a Christian faith and standing. The words already referred to, spoken to Nicodemus, are most reasonably explained, not as enforcing a double necessity of baptism and of spiritual regeneration, but one necessity, — the moral and religious birth, of which the washing of water was the recognized symbol and the spirit of God the efficient cause, in opposition to the Jewish trust in natural descent from Abraham. Any thing so contrary to the general tenor of Christ's teaching as

the absolute necessity of an outward and ritual observance can be received only on the authority of an express declaration. There is no such express declaration of the indispensableness of baptism. If Paul had regarded this rite as the invariable and necessary condition of a Christian position and salvation, expressly enjoined and instituted by the Lord, he could not have said, "Christ sent me not to baptize." His way of speaking of it shows that he looked on it as a thing of subordinate importance, — as a sign, which, being in use and well understood, and approved by the Lord, should be observed, but to be carefully restrained to its proper use as a symbol only; that he avoided any views that seemed to attribute to it any efficacy other than as a sign and pledge of a new and better life after it.

With regard to the method of baptism, there is nothing to prove that the form was considered material, — nothing to make it certain that any one form was exclusively used. It is not improbable that it was often by immersion. Habits and conditions peculiar to that age and climate made this a far less inconvenient and otherwise objectionable form than in our time and situation. Several recorded instances of baptism are such as most naturally to be understood of some other method than immersion, — as that of Paul, just rising from a long season of prostration and fasting; that of the jailer's family; and perhaps that of the great multitude added to the Church at Pentecost. But whatever the practice was at that time, it is contrary to the essential nature of the gospel to suppose any religious importance to be in a precise imitation. No Church in the world, it is probable, observes the Lord's Supper in precisely the same way that it was first observed. Yet Christians do not any the less believe that they are obeying the precept of the Master. The idea is the essential thing

"The flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you are spirit and are life." So baptism, being a symbol, may, with obvious propriety, vary to suit the physical circumstances of person and place. In some cases, it is obviously impracticable to administer the rite by immersion. It cannot be thought that Christ meant to make spiritual ends depend on uncertain material conditions. We believe it is actually following Christ, to assert our freedom from an unvarying rule of form, while we aim to preserve the moral and spiritual significance.

With regard to the baptism of children in infancy, we hold that the New Testament does not give any explicit information. The words in Acts viii. 16, taken in connection with what immediately precedes, and interpreted in the light of what is well known to have been the custom of the Jews, create a strong presumption that children were baptized then and there by the apostle, or under his immediate direction. The words of ver. 16 are most obviously explained as a reason for the precept of the preceding verse, and as intended to meet a doubt, which some might feel, whether Christian baptism was meant for children as well as adults. The several instances where households are said to have been baptized, as if following the lead and example of the head of the family, strengthen the presumption. Moreover, this has been the practice of the Church from the earliest times of which we have record. The first fathers allude to the custom, as that which was in general use, and derived from the traditions of the apostles. They discuss questions as to time and other conditions, but not as to the fitness of the custom itself. We favor this practice also on grounds of reason, which are good in the absence of express precept to the contrary, as significant of the divinely ordained connection between the life of the parent and that of the children; and symbolic of the gen-

eral law, that children of faithful Christian parents grow up believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We do not regard the baptism of the young as a completed thing, until, being brought up in the knowledge of God and the Saviour, and having attained to the power of acting and judging for themselves, they openly and freely adopt the act of their parents as their own. The significance of infant baptism depends much on our faith in the Church as the organic and perpetually renewed body of Christ, — one, though ever changing, — and resting on the divinely appointed continuity of human life. The children of Christian parents are born into the Church of Christ. They are the Lord's. Baptism does not make the bond. It declares it, and pledges the parent to fidelity in his efforts to make it a lasting and complete union by the Christian nurture and instruction of his offspring.

We regard baptism as only a symbol, in itself of no effect, as signing the pledge is in the case of one who abandons the use of alcohol. This symbol is of higher respect than any other, as having come to us through ages of Christian observance, as pertaining to the most momentous interests and duties, and as sanctioned by the example and authority of the Head of the Church. It is not formality to adhere to it, there being no objection to it, when it is held free from superstitious notions, either as to its efficacy or its form; and, on the other hand, there being many good reasons for continuing it. Those rather are formalists, who, like the Quakers, make a *point*, and therefore a *form*, of rejecting all forms. It is the only visible mark of the unity of the Church, — one Lord, one baptism. It is a plain, easy, intelligible way of performing a universal duty, that of openly confessing faith in Christ; an equally intelligible sign of the pure and righteous life to which the Christian pledges himself. Coming to us from Christ, and

administered in his name, it is a means of expressing, and therefore a means of strengthening, the sense of our union with him. It continues and visibly expresses the unity of the Church as the fellowship of believers in one Saviour, believers in God the Father through Christ the Son. We offer and urge it on the unbaptized, not as an avowal of holiness attained, or a saving change already wrought, but, after the apostles' custom, as a simple act of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Teacher and Redeemer; the law of our higher and better life, when life in its strength is ours; and the ground of a hope triumphant over sickness and the fear of death.

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[No. 7]

ZEAL WITHOUT DOGMATISM

A MESSAGE TO UNITARIANS

BY REV. CHARLES E. ST. JOHN

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

the discovery has always been made by the philosophic observer that both parties have been striving to express the same truths and life-giving convictions.

As we are a part of the self-reliant world, we have been entangled, willingly, in its struggles of the intellectual advance; but even through the times of our fiercest debates, external or internal, we have been conscious of an underlying and far-reaching ideal, the conception that our philosophy is that of seeing every good thing clearly, in whatever creed or action it may be embodied. Though, when strife is on, we wage a partisan warfare, partisanship is not our glory nor our essential spirit.

If I were to personify what I conceive to be the Unitarian philosophy of religion, I should claim that we are best represented by Sandalphon, the angel of glory, Sandalphon, the angel of prayer. We know nothing about Sandalphon except that he was deathless among the perishing angels, and that he was a spirit of appreciation. Let me recall Longfellow's picture of him,—

"There, erect, at the outermost gates
Of the city celestial he waits,
With his feet on the ladder of light,
That, crowded with angels unnumbered,
By Jacob was seen, as he slumbered
Alone in the desert at night.

"The Angels of Wind and of Fire
Chant only one hymn, and expire
With the song's irresistible stress;
But serene in the rapturous throng,
Unmoved by the rush of the song,
With eyes unimpassioned and slow,
Among the dead angels, the deathless
Sandalphon stands, listening, breathless,
To sounds that ascend from below

"From the spirits on earth that adore,
From the souls that entreat and implore
In the fervor and passion of prayer;
From the hearts that are broken with losses,
And weary with dragging the crosses
Too heavy for mortals to bear.

"And he gathers the prayer, as he stands,
And they change into flowers in his hands,
Into garlands of purple and red;
And beneath the great arch of the portal,
Through the streets of the City Immortal,
Is wafted the fragrance they shed."

An appreciation self-restrained so as to make no mistakes, and yet breathlessly attentive so as to miss nothing good; an attention so delicate and so just that it causes all the yearnings of humanity to discard their imperfections and localisms, and show in the eternal light their inner beauty and fragrance; an angel of glory and of prayer, a deathless power of comprehending the spiritual significance of each soul's imperfect, creedal articulation of the inner life,— such is the intellectual side of Unitarianism. And, if it ever seem to any "unimpassioned and slow," a juster glance will show them that this is because it is "listening breathless" to all the world's revelations of truth and life, and with fine self-abnegation recognizing the full glory of the human convictions which are contrary to its own.

So far as our Church is concerned, the age of dogmatism has passed. Yet we would not affirm this freedom of ours in a dogmatic manner; for, even in dogmatism, we strive to see the everlasting light, and of each and every dogma it is true that we would far rather understand it in all its essential glory than denounce it. We make all

the sincere convictions of the world the objects of our philosophic study, and, doing so, we find something great and lovely in them all. Therefore, I do not conceive it to be our mission to deliver the world from dogmatism. That exists because it is a serviceable thing, and its inevitable end will come when it ceases to serve any soul. We, who desire none of it for ourselves, will be wasting our breath if we challenge it; for our philosophy rather bids us find out what has been and is its secret of usefulness to the spiritual life. When we thus give it brotherly attention, we observe among its several glories the blood-red blossom of enthusiasm. Men are always zealous in the support of such of their convictions as have solidified into dogmas; and, inasmuch as religion without zeal is like science without a purpose, we shall find all forms of dogmatism deepening into loveliness and fragrance when we feel the throbbing of their earnestness.

If all the persons whose aversion to that which is dogmatic has made them indifferent to religion would intelligently employ the Unitarian philosophic method of observation, they would be deeply impressed by the fact that the majority of mankind have so clearly recognized the immense value of religious earnestness that, rather than lose it, they have submitted to each and every imposition of dogma, bidding the reason cease its clamors that seem to threaten the foundations of zeal. The truth is that zeal has rightly been recognized as the very life of religion, and whosoever supposes that zeal and dogmatism cannot be severed *ought* to silence his reason and stand by dogmatism. It is this fundamentally righteous purpose that keeps many of our day, who would naturally be progressive in their theology, in determined allegiance with the creeds, which, though unprogressive, are the

ancient guardians of an undiminishing zeal. From their premises they are quite right; and whosoever presents the claims of the reason in any way that seems antagonistic to that mighty purpose may as well chatter to the winds, for he cannot move human souls. From time immemorial the power for good possessed by any Church has been in proportion to its zeal, not in proportion to its truth; and no man can speak justly about the dogmas of the past until he understands how it is that they have so steadfastly fanned the flames of zeal. Moreover, no church that is founded on the living reason of its members rather than upon dogmas shaped of old can rise to its full usefulness until it has demonstrated that the reason is but a new and stouter guardian of good old Christian zeal.

The acceptance of religious zeal has been in very many cases a matter of contagion. Receiving it thus for the joy of its undeniable helpfulness, people have been content to take unchallenged with it the dogmas that may chance to be its shibboleth. But the world holds increasing numbers who for one cause or another are immune against this blessed contagion; and the mission of Unitarianism, which I have said lies not in its philosophy, its intellectual power of seeing the good in all things,— the mission of Unitarianism is towards these spiritual immunes. Without dogmatism we are to impart zeal. So far as the essence of the religious life is concerned, the intellectual freedom, the spirit of far-seeing appreciativeness, is but a new shibboleth,— one so noble and so dignified that the world longs to accept it, but cannot, because its deeper implications have not been made sufficiently clear. But the truth is that, when this spirit of brotherly appreciation, wherein Unitarianism is like unto

an angel of glory and prayer, is itself deeply understood, we invariably find that it, too, has the wondrous blossom and vitality of enthusiasm.

In truth, our philosophy, our breathlessness of appreciation of what is earnest in the world, is a spirit peculiarly calculated to arouse enthusiasm. I venture the assertion that no soul that has broadly and systematically grasped this Unitarian philosophy of religion has ever failed to be zealous in applying it to life; for it is a philosophy that makes sin ugly, selfishness abhorrent, and goodness the solid foundation of life eternal. For think what Unitarianism is on its intellectual side,— a continual vision of the fine human earnestness underlying all phases of thought, and of the infinite orderliness with which the thoughts of God have been wrought out in the processes of creation. Studying the most familiar facts of the physical world, we straightway come upon laws that lift us to a definite knowledge of God. Recognizing the inherent loveliness and perfectibility of human nature, we come upon something deeper about God, and learn something about man's relation to him. Reasoning from the little we see of God and the much we know about man, we discover the supremacy of the soul over the body and the earth, and so come in view of the everlasting life. Everywhere to our eyes the sublimity of order and the intimate particularity of perfect love, everywhere the evidence of the permanent vitality of righteousness and the subsidiary nature of imperfection and sin, everywhere the life of the spirit shining as the crown and glory of the experiences and conditions of the earth. Everything that we see and touch changes into flowers in our hands, and the fragrance thus distilled sweetens the life of the immortals. So, I repeat, no Uni-

tarian can adequately perceive the actual reach and significance of his philosophy of appreciation without becoming possessed from crown to foot with the spiritual uplift, the delight, the enthusiasm, of self-consecration to the service of so grand a faith.

It is a faith the intellectual grounds of which are not confined to the Bible or to any aspect of the life of Jesus Christ. Those unrivalled manifestations of God enter with all others into the range of our observation, and in them we see by the strength of our unforced intelligence the permanent good they express. Unquestionably, enough of inspiration is there to fill us with most holy zeal for religion; but this zeal can only increase when we perceive how many more grounds of faith we have in that we find spiritual implications in the generalizations of modern science, wonderful objects of conviction in all the laws of nature, in the multitudinous beauty and the wholesomeness of the universe, in the certainties of the moral law as the latest civilizations reveal them, in the stately march of evolution with all things known to us under God, and in the fascinating characteristics of finite and infinite personality with its sweeping power over all that is material. In the perception of all these living manifestations of truth, Unitarianism as a philosophy is free from every dogma, uncontrolled by any ancient and exclusive teaching, and at this moment "listening breathless" to the messages that are coming from below and from above. Nevertheless, on account of these very characteristics it is unreservedly and undividedly Christian. Dr. James Drummond demonstrates in his "Via, Veritas, Vita" that Christian churches are held together and Christian living maintained by a certain consecrated spirit or life-motive which

the world has learned from the Christ; and we have ever found that increasing freedom of the mind, if so be that the mind also gains in clearness and sympathy of perception of the patent facts of creation, serves most insistently to deepen and broaden this spirit of Christ which is man's ultimate ideal as a motive of conduct. Our philosophy is just appreciation of everything that is and has been and shall be: our mission is life in the spirit of Jesus Christ. And our mission grows out of our philosophy; as we find that all sincere human thinking and striving reveal in the alembic of fine appreciation this very Christian spirit, this splendid and unselfish earnestness as their motive and reason for existence. Every person who has seen and comprehended the great things of life believes in them; and every one who thus believes is a soul in earnest, a zealous spirit after the stamp that is called Christian.

Every Unitarian in the world who is not zealous for his faith is thus degenerate for one of two causes. Those fatal causes are ignorance and selfishness, and the observer cannot always tell which one of them is operating in a given case of religious indifference; for the hiding-places of ignorance in minds that are professedly cultured are subtle, and the secrets of selfishness are many and various. But let me say a word about both of these afflictions. Usually, I think, the cause is ignorance; and it is frankly confessed, so far as the victims are aware of it. We hear people saying that they do not know what they believe, that they are uncertain about the reality of God as a being who can be loved, that they are doubtful of the value of human existence, that they see no reason to believe in a life eternal. No person could talk that way who had really grasped the full meaning and glory

of the modern Christian faith, understood what we make to be the dignity and worth of human nature, the all-controlling nature of the divine presence in the world, the religious significance of every word of science, and the irresistible force of our reasons for foreseeing an eternal life. The indifferent have fallen short of the mighty scope of the faith. Understanding the dogmas of the world clearly enough to know that they cannot accept them, and so, perhaps, being philosophically Unitarian, they yet fail to understand the undogmatic religious position, with the consequence that they are not vitally Unitarian. If they understood these far-reaching convictions, they could not fail to believe them, and to be zealous for them. Never yet, when the full majesty and infinite reach of our faith possessed a well-meaning soul, did that soul fail to respond to its inspirations by personal earnestness and noble living. Between the holy vision of the divine unity of all things and the resultant perfectibility of all souls, and the individual loyalty of a passionately zealous life there stands no gap; for the one commands the other as its natural blooming and fruitage. No gap, unless — unless the second cause of religious indifference appears, deliberate choice of an evil and selfish use of time. Great is the benumbing power of temptation. "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." The person who dallies with his temptations and weaknesses instead of resolutely crowding them out of his mind by the fulness of his interest in the things of the spirit is one in whom self-reliance is bound to degenerate into self-indulgence. To please one's self in this present moment of desire is an easy path, and along it the noble things of life are not found. When one has

drifted into it, nothing will lift him out save his own moral resolution.

Such cases make it clear that there is always something more in religious zeal than simply an inspiration from the glory of the things we believe. There is a strong element of personal resolution in it. Just as we can command ourselves to be observant of the good in other people's beliefs, so we can resolve to be zealous when our judgment provides us good reasons for it; and many a soul, enlightened or otherwise, stops idly short of the full power of the Christian life for the mere lack of such a resolution as shall correlate his own activities with the glories which he sees around him or in history. This need of personal determination in the matter is one of the noblest characterizations of zeal. Earnestness cannot be simply absorbed from one's teachers and leaders, nor successfully put on at the command of an external authority, especially not in the case of any independent thinker. It has to be a voluntary thing, an inward quickening of the spiritual life. Until that inward and personal allegiance with the truth you see in the world has risen up in all its grandeur in your soul, you are not a full-grown Unitarian.

All this lays upon each one of our churches a responsibility not to be lightly met. It is only when pulpit and pew thrill with a responsive earnestness that our work is adequately done, and the one spiritual weakness which the churches must not condone in their ministers is a deficiency in zeal. If preachers can be scholarly, refined, genial, that is well; but they *must* be hopeful and zealous. If they are not this, they are dead weights on the necks of the churches; and in all the scope of the divine discipline of life there is no place where penal-

ties are surer than those which befall the church which weakly submits to a lack of earnestness in the pulpit. Such a church deserves to lose strength after strength, deserves its increasing feebleness of worship, deserves at last to lose its regimental number in the army of the Lord. A Christian church is an organization under orders to bestow life upon the community in which it is stationed, and it fails to do its duty if ever the voice from the pulpit "gives an uncertain sound." The gentle motives of pity or love for the man should not cause a church to forget that its mission is not to cherish one man, but rather to strive mightily for religion, and to insist that the man in the pulpit be one who can call out in his comrades the "mind to work."

If I am right in what I have been saying, it becomes very clear what should be the aim of all Unitarian preaching and church work. It should be, in the first place, appreciative rather than controversial, regarding all the dogmas of the diverse branches of the world's theological thinking and religious activity. In the second place, it should be carefully educative, so as to lead men to gain the broad perception of the glory of the universe of past, present, and future, of the wholesomeness and endlessness of the soul's nature, and of the solidity of all spiritual interests through the eternal God on whom they rest. And in the third place it should be morally inspiriting, throbbing constantly with the purpose and power of arousing in every soul that personal consecration which is man's only fit response to the all-pervading strength and beauty of the will of God. We are the guardians of a philosophy of appreciation, a work of education, and a mission of inspiration.

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 8]

WHAT DO UNITARIANS BELIEVE?

A STATEMENT OF FAITH.

BY

REV. CHARLES W. WENDTÉ

Together with Appendices

ON THE

UNITARIAN CHURCH AND THE UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

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WHAT DO UNITARIANS BELIEVE?

In the Book of Acts (xxviii. 22) we read that the Jews at Rome said to the apostle Paul, the prisoner of the Lord: "We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against." This utterance is applicable to the Unitarians of the present day, for like the early Christians we find that everywhere we are "spoken against." Sometimes this gainsaying takes the form of a holy horror and bigoted opposition. Unitarians are held to be an unbelieving, unspiritual, and worldly people, but little better than infidels, and a great deal more dangerous to the Christian cause. This low opinion of our doctrines and motives often springs from wilful ignorance and blind prejudice. It would be a thankless task to attempt to change it by argument or disproof. The best course for us to pursue is to go our own way as uprightly and charitably as we can, and to trust that time and a better acquaintance will correct all such ungenerous and mistaken opinions about us.

There is, however, a large and an increasing number of persons, who, laying aside all prejudice and self-righteousness, come as simple seekers after truth and inquire of us, "We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest?" Such a question we are always ready to answer in the same spirit in which it is asked. For while the Unitarian lays no

stress on the formal profession of religious opinions, holding that life is more than thought, a pure character above a correct theology, yet there is nothing in this that precludes belief or negatives the holding of well-defined opinions on religious subjects. On the contrary, we believe that righteousness of life and perfection of character can best be attained through a lofty religious faith. We believe that faith must underlie all genuine effort; that a faithless life is a weak and worthless one, and that doctrines, as the affirmations and axioms of faith, are of great importance to the religious life of man.

UNITARIANS HAVE NO CREED.

We cannot, however, answer the question, "What thinkest thou?" by pointing to an authoritative and all-sufficient creed. For it is a distinctive feature of Unitarianism that it has no such creed. We can see no possible good, but much positive harm resulting from such stereotyped and professedly infallible formulas of belief. The history of the Christian Church will bear out the assertion that a creed hinders the development and efficacy of religious truth, and leads to mental sluggishness and insincerity on the part of those who subscribe to it; that it fosters ecclesiastical pride and power, and is the fruitful mother of uncharity, sectarianism, intolerance, and persecution. For these reasons, among others, we do not require allegiance to any such unprogressive standard of belief as a creed. We hold that it does not help but rather hinders the spiritual life, and instead of being the vehicle of religious faith often becomes its prison and its tomb. For faith is one thing, a creed is another. Faith is a state of the mind; a creed is a statement of the mind. The former is the spirit which giveth life, the latter is too often the letter which killeth. Now the first condition of all genuine faith

is absolute freedom to inquire, and to freely utter and alter its opinions. In thus exercising the right of private judgment the Unitarians have been the Protestants of the Protestants. Said Dr. Channing: "If I have found life an increasing good, if I have in any measure succeeded in enlarging my own mind, if I have risen to any generous views of the Christian religion or human nature, I owe this happiness, under God, chiefly to the intellectual freedom which I have enjoyed. This has been to me the breath of life, and I must vindicate it for others as well as for myself." This noble passage well expresses the working principle of the Unitarian body. Each one of us examines, thinks, believes, and speaks as he will in religious matters. For his belief and its utterance he is responsible only to his own soul and to God. Since great uncertainty must always attend the thinking of finite and fallible minds, we believe that God holds no one responsible for the actual attainment of Divine knowledge, but only for the serious search after it. As Channing has expressed it, we are responsible not for the *rightness*, but for the *uprightness*, of our personal opinions.

Again, we do not believe that a creed is necessary as a condition of denominational or church fellowship. It may be a convenience in building up a large sect, in simplifying the technical process called conversion, and in maintaining the authority of church and clergy. But we have no such aims. We put our faith in ideas and ideals rather than in ecclesiastical machinery. We labor for the development of religious truth and its application to the life of man. We care less to build up the outward church than to spread the gospel of light, liberty, and love. The church, the ministry, the stated worship are useful instrumentalities to this end, but only when they are rightly made subordinate to it. Too often, however, as we see by many sad examples in the Christian world to-day, the interests of a particular

church or sect are made paramount to the interests of religious enlightenment, progress, and reform. To avoid this evil the Unitarian maintains the greatest freedom and simplicity in his ecclesiastical relations. He refuses to base his religious fellowship upon mere theological agreement, but declares that its prime condition is, in the language of Dr. James Martineau, "to have a fearless respect for intellectual freedom, and to trust the bonds of piety, righteousness, and love, amidst large varieties of thought." This implies a belief in the absolute independence of each and every congregation of worshippers, free from all control by clergy, synod, or assembly. The individual rights of each member of the congregation are no less sacredly guarded. We deny the right of any church to reject or select members upon any grounds of superior faith or merit, and hence, also, we refuse to be held responsible for the character and performance, as individuals, of such persons as may choose to unite with us. To us the church is not a private circle of elect saints or a Sanhedrin of the infallibly right in religious matters. It is rather an assembly of worshippers and truth-seekers, a body of learners conscious of their ignorance and imperfection, an association for mutual improvement and helpfulness, and a well-approved instrumentality for uplifting and blessing the world.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY.

"Unitarianism," in the words of Dr. Dewey, "is not so much a system of thought, as a way of thinking." And Dr. Hedge expresses a similar idea when he says, "Unitarianism is not a theology; it is a collection of theologies." This is the natural and logical result of that free and fearless use of the reason in religious questions which distinguishes the Unitarian above all other Christians. He accepts no doctrine which seems to him unfounded and

irrational, no matter how venerable and sacred it may be, or what outward authority upholds it. He holds himself under the highest moral obligation to form his own opinions in religion and to justify that belief to his own mind and heart. The result of such a method is the greatest individuality of opinion. Yet, starting from the same or similar premises in the nature of things, and using the same method of reason in religion, it is natural that Unitarians should come to similar conclusions, and should find sufficient affinity in their views and aims to permit of the largest intellectual and moral sympathy and the most efficient union for practical work. If, therefore, Unitarians have no permanent, infallible, and binding creed, they nevertheless find themselves in substantial agreement on the cardinal points of religious belief, and are thus enabled to unite from time to time in many glorious affirmations concerning man's nature, duty, and destiny, and his relations with the Divine. Such a statement is herewith offered the reader. It is necessary to preface it by saying that for want of space, fundamentals in doctrine can alone be treated, and that for whatever may be affirmed in this discourse concerning the Unitarian belief, the writer alone must be held responsible. With every desire to do justice to the various shades of opinion in the body, it is nevertheless possible that his own views may insensibly color this statement of faith.

RELIGION.

In the first place, then, we believe in Religion; in the necessary existence, permanence, and importance of the religious sentiment. We hold that man is by natural constitution a religious being, and finds it a moral necessity to express his wonder, awe, veneration, and love in the forms and offices of worship. The researches of the

ethnologist coinciding with the testimony of Christian missionaries may inform us that there are savage peoples entirely destitute of religious ideas and practices, and here and there in civilized society we meet with persons who disclaim the possession of any religious feelings or desires whatever; yet this no more disproves the universality of religion than the occasional idiot disproves the distribution of intellectual gifts among men. Such exceptional instances merely show that the religious sentiment is not always and equally active; that it requires certain antecedents before it can manifest itself. It may not always be found in the earlier and rudimentary stages of human culture, but it is always found in civilized society. "Where humanity is at its highest, there religion is at its highest also." Consider the nations and the names, the eras and the events most noteworthy in human society, and you will find them intimately, inseparably connected with the history of religious development. As Goethe said, "The one, real, underlying theme in the history of the world, to which all other questions are subordinate, is the conflict between faith and unfaith." Therefore, we see in the religious sentiment no crude emotion, no politic concession to man's weakness, no perishable superstition, but the motive power of humanity, the radical force of society, the emancipator and inspirer of the human soul. Religion has produced the loftiest types of character and inspired the noblest deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice the world has ever known. And even when misdirected and distorted by the unenlightened reason, the selfish passions of mankind, in its very degradation it still remains an impressive witness to the mighty forces that are lodged in the spiritual constitution of man. So, though its outward forms are changing from day to day, though past sanctions no longer hold their power, and ancient creeds and churches crumble into ruin, the religious sentiment remains

the highest interest of human life, — an inspiring power that lifts man out of appetite and passion to higher levels of thought and feeling, and into likeness with the divine.

CHRISTIANITY.

In the second place, we believe in Christianity as the purest and best form of religion. Not that we deny the good in other forms of religion, but we believe Christianity to be the noblest among them, as well as the one most congenial to us from our antecedents and habits of thought and life. This statement requires some qualification, however. We do not believe in the Christianity of the Apostolic Church, with its admixture of old-time Jewish intolerance and Pagan superstition; nor in the Scholastic Christianity of the Middle Ages, which so often sacrificed truth to metaphysics, and love to logic; nor in the Christianity of Luther, or Calvin, or Jonathan Edwards, or of Channing even; but we believe in the Christianity of Christ. Penetrating beneath the accretions with which eighteen centuries of theological speculation and ecclesiastical development have overlaid his simple gospel, we think we can discern enough, even in the fragmentary record of his career and teaching which has been handed down the ages, to make the word and example of Jesus of Nazareth the way, the truth, and the life to us. This Christianity we accept as altogether the highest and best revelation of religious truth the world has ever known. Yet we do not believe that even the sublime precepts of Jesus exhaust the possibilities of the religious life. The vast increase of knowledge and experience which the centuries have brought with them have made possible also a new expansion and many new applications of religious truth. We are constantly receiving new revelations of divine wisdom from the Holy Spirit of God, which, as

Jesus himself said, was to continue his work and to lead us into all truth. Under this spiritual guidance and instruction we look for a constant growth in divine knowledge and holiness on the part of man, and reverently say with the apostle, "Leaving the first principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection."

GOD.

This belief in the Christian religion implies an acceptance of its first and fundamental truth, the existence and perfect character of God. But here again we must discriminate, for "every great affirmation holds a denial in its bosom." We do not believe in the God of Abraham and Jacob, who, despite the many spiritual and beautiful traits with which they invested him, is yet in parts and passions like unto men; who descends to the earth to hold familiar intercourse with his creatures, and can be flattered, diverted from his purpose, and over-influenced by them. Our God is no partial ruler who selects here an individual and there a nation for his particular favor, and casts off their fellows from his gracious provision. No, nor a childish God, who creates the world in six days, rests on the seventh, repents him of having made man, and constantly interferes in the working of the Universe to supplement his original plan by an afterthought. Nor do we believe in the God of the Romanist, whom the priest can create and control in the consecrated wafer; nor yet in the Sovereign Deity of the Calvinist, that mystical, mythical being with three distinct and equal natures and yet but one personality, who selfishly creates man for his own glory, capriciously predestines him to a career of happiness or of misery, and punishes him vindictively throughout all eternity for sins which he never committed or else could not help committing.

We do not believe in *a* God even, but in GOD! Who shall attempt to define him? For all definition is limitation, and he is the One and the All. Neither is it for the finite to comprehend the infinite. Hence, we dare not venture with the Tritheist to cramp the Divine Nature into a mathematical formula, or map out the necessary attributes of Deity, or declare that God must of needs be this and do that. We reverently confess his inscrutability, and the presumption of any analysis of the Divine psychology. To the soul's deep question comes back ever the self-same answer, "I am that which I am." Truly, "such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain unto it!" Yet we believe in God, for it has been well said that while no subject is fraught with such supreme difficulties to the inquirer, no conviction is borne into the human mind with such irresistible power as that there is, there *must* be a God. Therefore, though we say with the Psalmist in despondent humility, "Who by searching can find out God?" we also ask with him in grateful joy, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, whither shall I flee from thy presence?" While we cannot grasp the thought of God as he is in himself, we may know him as he is to us, as he reveals himself to the understanding and conscience and heart of man. From every side come to us the convincing testimonies to his power and wisdom, love and holiness. And though in all our knowledge of him we must reverently confess, "Lo, these are only a part of his ways, but how little a portion is yet known of him," yet we feel assured by these very glimpses into his providential working that "he is infinitely more than the best believe or the happiest hope;" that we have a right, with Jesus, to look up trustfully and say, "Our Father, which art in Heaven." The truth, which the intellect cannot fathom, is disclosed to the loving and trustful heart.

REVELATION.

This leads me to say in the next place that we believe in Revelation. We do not, however, believe in any narrow interpretation of this great spiritual fact. We do not believe that God discloses his purposes here and there to a favored individual or nation, carves his divine commandments with his own finger on two tables of Arab granite, or seals his message to humanity within the lids of a single book. We do not believe that he has revealed himself but once, and then for all time. We believe rather in that larger view of revelation which makes the divine inspiration constant and perpetual: —

> "Revelation is not sealed,
> *Answering unto man's endeavor,*
> Truth and right are still revealed.
> That which came to ancient sages,
> Greek, Barbarian, Roman, Jew,
> Written in the heart's deep pages,
> Shines to-day, forever new."

The God we worship is immanent in his creation, and all things he made he inspires forever. The universe, as we behold it, is not a finality, complete and perfect, it is a world in the making. Through natural laws, and orderly, unbroken processes of evolution its development is ever going on. From monad to man the series ascends; from atom to angel the chain is unbroken. The clod beneath our feet thrills with germinal impulses, "the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God," and of mankind it is written that "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." The material universe, thus conceived, is an eternal and glorious revelation of God. What disclosures of indwelling power and wisdom are made to us in the facts and laws of substance! There is a new dispensation called Science which reveals the

God whom, as yet, it will not name. Darwin and Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer, and Fiske are among the latter-day prophets whose burden is the Divine intelligence and foresight. True, they are chiefly concerned with the facts of matter; but read between the lines of their communications and you will discern the inspiring truth that all nature is instinct with life, and that all life is controlled by law. "Nothing is lifeless, nothing is lawless." The explanation of these two correlated facts is found — and found only — in the existence of a Supreme Being, whose will is the life, and whose perfect intelligence is the law. We welcome, therefore, each new discovery of science which increases our knowledge of the structure and method of the universe, since it also enlarges our conception of the Deity, more fully acquaints us with his holy will and way, and adds to our reverent awe at thought of him.

Again, we believe in the revelation which human History gives us of the watchful oversight and beneficent purposes of God. In a higher sense, history is only the annals of Providence, the records of God's dealing with man, evolving order and progress out of the chaos of human passions and deeds, impressively teaching the supremacy of his laws, and enforcing obedience to them on the part of individuals and peoples.

Most clearly and potently of all, however, the Eternal and All-Holy One is revealed in the spirit of man; in his intelligence, character, affection, and will. By these gifts of mind and conscience and heart we interpret the existing nature of things. The human soul, divinely inspired, is the key to the visible creation. The measure in which we receive this inspiration is the measure of our personal desert and endeavor. The pure heart and the discerning intellect see God. To these he discloses himself as the Eternal Presence, the inner Light, the answering Word.

PRAYER.

All this implies that we believe in Worship and the exercise of Prayer; yet not in any superstitious or mechanical use of this high privilege of the soul. We do not believe in praying for material goods, for the miraculous curing of the sick, or the changing of the weather. Prayer is to us an act of devotion, and not of self-seeking. We pray because we feel it a spiritual necessity to utter our adoration, praise, and thankfulness to the all-perfect and all-loving Father. We pray to melt away the dross of worldly, selfish desire, to utter our aspiration after the pure and perfect life, and to bring our nature into obedience and harmony with the Divine will. This form of prayer we find, in our experience, an approved and efficacious method of spiritual invigoration and renewal; for they that in this wise ask receive the needed strength, and they that seek do find the peace of God.

THE BIBLE.

Unitarians believe in the Bible as a venerable and inspired record of this revelation of God in Nature, History, and the Human Soul. In the Old Testament Psalms, the Book of Job, and the Parables of Jesus the beauty and grandeur of the material world are celebrated with surpassing eloquence of speech, and profound religious lessons are drawn from it for the edification of the believer. In a long series of spiritual biographies, and in the typical history of the people of Israel, convincing testimony is borne to the presence and purpose of the Eternal in the career of individuals and of nations. In the solemn injunctions of ancient sages, the impassioned declarations of the prophets, the spiritual longings of the Psalmist, and, above all, in the saintly precepts and

holy example of the Christ, the spiritual capacities of man's nature are impressively vindicated, and his kinship with his heavenly Father established. For these qualities and services to our race we revere and believe in the Bible; yet not in the old and blind way. We do not hold it as a fetish, as a literally inspired and infallible oracle of God. We discriminate between what is permanent and what is transient, between what is valuable and what is indifferent in the Scriptures. We distinguish that which is universal from that which is due to the age and personality of the writer. We refuse to believe in the divine origin of the present canon, or in the equal value of the different books. We subject the Bible to the tests of reason and conscience, and apply to it the same laws of literary value that govern other books. We do not accept any crude ideas of the origin and government of the world, or of the character of the Deity, simply because we find them in the Bible. We cannot believe that the reading of the dreary chronicle of Hebrew wars, or the dry details of the Levitical law, is promotive of spiritual edification. Nor can we hold a Hebrew love poem like the Song of Solomon, or the fanatical Book of Revelation (notwithstanding its passages of great beauty and power), to be of equal inspiration with the Psalms of David or the Sermon on the Mount. And when this process of criticism is ended, what result have we arrived at? Why, the Bible is still the book of books to us. We believe that it contains the highest, deepest thoughts concerning man's relation with the infinite above, his fellow-beings around, and the mystery within him. We read in it, with O. B. Frothingham, "the purest expressions of faith and hope, the finest aspirations after truth, the sweetest sentiments of confidence and trust, hymns of praise, proverbs of wisdom, readings of the moral law, interpretations of providence, rules of worship . . .

sketches of saintly character, narratives of holy lives, lessons in devoutness, humility, patience, and charity." Truly, it is our manual of devotion, our treasury of moral and religious instruction, our unfailing source of spiritual nourishment.

Every race has its Bible, and all Scripture is given by inspiration. But, little as we know as yet concerning the ethnic Scriptures, — the Vedas, Zendavest, Shu Kings, and Koran, — we know enough to see that the Jewish and Christian sacred books are greatly superior to them in literary, moral, and religious values, and this because they flowed out of a higher conception of God and man and human duty, and out of a nearer converse with the Divine.

JESUS CHRIST.

I proceed to say that the Unitarian believes in Jesus Christ. The definition of this point of belief is attended with more or less difficulty, for on no article of faith are the opinions so various among us. To use once more the method of negation in order to emphasize our distinction from other Christian believers, we do not believe in the Jewish Messiah of the New Testament who is to return in the clouds, attended by troops of angels; at whose appearance the sun and moon will lose their lustre, the stars fall from heaven, and the graves give up their dead. Nor do we believe in the Christ of the Church, that ecclesiastical doll which has so long served as a lay figure for the trappings and shows of the liturgy, and lent the sanctions of its name to uphold the authority of the priesthood. testimony Believe in the Christ of the creed, that theo- Eternal in the ca which has no justification in history or the solemn injunctigs, — this Christ of dogma, the second declarations of thoead, who descends to earth to make the Psalmist, and, aber's sin, redeems him through the

shedding of his blood, and remains forever the mediator and saviour of all who accept and pray to or through him for forgiveness, redemption, and life eternal.

But we believe in Jesus the Christ of the gospels, stripped of all ecclesiastical wrappings, all theological refinements, all speculative fancies. On the subject of his nature, mission, and authority we are divided into two great schools, the first consisting of those who approach him on the divine, and the second of those who contemplate him from the human side of his nature. The former conceive him to have been a unique being, ranking between man and God, supernaturally born, divinely commissioned for a special work, and invested with superhuman power for that work. His word is infallible, his character impeccable, his spiritual authority final. The second class believe Jesus to have been naturally born of Joseph and Mary, endowed with qualities and powers differing in degree, and not in kind, from those which all men enjoy; that his character was a growth, and that by experiences and processes similar to our own he rose out of sin and error into the serene strength of an untemptable manhood. They believe that his word is authoritative in no other wise than as it is true, and that his mission was to instruct, emancipate, and spiritualize, and so redeem humanity from its bondage of error and sin. But all Unitarians agree that the mediation of Jesus was not official but purely moral; that we are redeemed, not by his blood, but by his goodness, and less by his death than by his life. For he died, "leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps."

Between these two extremes of belief which I have stated, the gradations, the shadings, the varieties of opinion concerning Jesus are innumerable. On all such disputed points, however, we agree to differ. For we hold it far more essential to have the spirit of Christ in our

hearts, than to have the correct view of his person and mission. And that this was also the opinion of the Master we know by his saying, "Whosoever shall speak against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever shall blaspheme the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven him."

HUMAN NATURE.

Let me add here that Unitarians believe in the lowest man as well as the highest. The most degraded of human beings still has in him something of God's delegated divinity, and, rightly placed and inspired, is capable of regeneration and a higher quality of life. The doctrine of total depravity, or that man is "lost in sin," and naturally incapable of good, we reject as unphilosophical and untrue. Not that we deny the actual imperfection of mankind. All men are sinners in the sense that all are violators of physical and moral laws established for their good. But this transgression is not an evidence that human nature is ruined, but only that it is *incomplete.* The current doctrine of the "fall" of man from a former state of ideal purity we hold to be irrational and baseless. We believe to the contrary, that man began on a very low plane of intellectual and moral being, and has manifested a constant progression in knowledge, freedom, and virtue. We believe that he inherits *propensities*, both good and bad, but never *guilt.* The personal experience we call sin is, with its attendant evils, a part of the Divine education of the race, and the necessary condition of its free moral agency. Therefore, while we mourn over every display of man's moral weakness, it does not prevent our believing in the essential dignity of human nature, and its gradual improvement through natural and orderly processes of evolution.

"Step by step, since time began,
We see the steady gain of man,"

and this gives us the largest faith and hope in his possible future.

IMMORTALITY.

Finally, we believe in our personal Immortality. We do not, however, attach it to any such crude notion as that of the resurrection of the physical body. Death is an incident in man's soul life which is neither to be sought nor avoided. When it comes it is a natural and incidental transition from one sphere of existence to another and still more spiritual one. The present life is beautiful and blessed if we but fulfil its conditions and use it aright. We believe that the future life may transcend and transfigure, but will not essentially change our present and personal relations. We believe that the soul will preserve in the hereafter its identity, memory, and affections. Heaven, to us, is not so much a place as a state, and not so much a state as a quality inhering in the soul. Endlessness is an attribute of our spiritual being, and eternal progress the condition of all life. The Unitarians, like all other believers, have their various philosophies and picturings of the life to come, but they try not to dogmatize about it, and not to insist on what is manifestly the offspring of religious feeling and faith as if it were a divine knowledge. The mystery which surrounds the future life was given for the health of man's spirit, and — as we see in Jesus — the higher, purer, the more absolute this faith in personal continuance after death, the less curiosity, the less speculation there is concerning its character and details. One thing suffices us, that the Kingdom of Heaven, whose immortal joys we long to taste, may be entered here and now, if, while on earth, we manifest the heavenly temper and live

the celestial life. This will be at once our most fitting preparation and our divinest encouragement. It seems necessary to say that the monstrous doctrine of eternal punishment we reject root and branch as derogatory to the character of God and utterly unfair to man. As we believe in human responsibility, however, it follows that we believe in the Divine Retribution. But we dislike to put forward either reward or punishment as a motive for moral action. We believe with the Scripture that "he that doeth wrong shall suffer for the wrong he doeth, and every one shall receive for the things done in his body, be they good or evil." All such retribution is, however, disciplinary and remedial in its character, and will be followed by the restoration of the offender to the fulness of the Divine favor.

CONCLUSION.

Such, then, is the Unitarian faith as I understand it. But all such statements must be partial and of temporary value. They are "good for this day only." The Unitarian is a progressive Christian. He seeks new light continually, and accepts new truth from any source, modifying or supplementing his creed accordingly. He has no fear that the fundamentals will be overthrown, for the foundation of God standeth exceeding sure. Believing thus in Religion, Christianity, God, Revelation, Jesus Christ, Prayer, the Bible, Human Nature, and Immortality, who can justly charge us with not believing anything? True, like all new and struggling faiths we are compelled to make many denials in defining our position, but every such negation carries with it a corresponding affirmation. We confidently declare, like the apostle of old: "If that which passed away was glorious, how much more that which remaineth." Though but a small sect, numerically speak-

ing, we venture to believe that we exercise an influence out of all proportion to our numbers. There is not an Orthodox believer in the community the rigors of whose creed are not insensibly softened by the existence of the Unitarian protest. There is not a liberal preacher in the Orthodox pulpit who is not encouraged and emboldened by our earlier, broader, and more radical affirmations. The new readings of Scripture and creed, the new interpretations of religious truth which so delight his auditors, have been household words among the Unitarians for half a century. We have no desire to found a great sect; we do not imagine that the Church of the future will be identical with our Unitarian denomination; but we believe that the *gospel* we proclaim is to inherit the earth. The present generation affords abundant witness to its marvellous increase and acceptance. The most popular preachers of the day are they who utter the sentiments and live in the spirit of our faith, however they may disguise it under ancient forms and names. The leading religious newspapers maintain it, albeit with bated breath and circumlocution. The literature of America thrills and tingles with its prophecy. The public press is its herald and champion. It is the underlying philosophy of modern philanthropy and reform. The science of to-day is its mighty pioneer and ally. It is not too much to say that the great thought of *Unity* in Diversity, which we represent in our denominational name and spirit, is the leading idea of the twentieth century.

It is this that reconciles us with the small size of our body and its slow rate of increase. We feel that this must be so of necessity, since we lay the emphasis not on church extension, but on the development and spread of our ideas. Yet we have our definite place and work in the Christian church as the forerunners and pioneers of the grand army of believers. We are among those who lead the advance.

who survey the ground, clear away obstructions, and send back constantly reports of safety, faith, and cheer; and presently the main body of Christianity moves forward to occupy the positions we have won and assured. Such is the mission of religious reformers, among whom we are numbered. But when the grand army has come up to where we stand, we may not rest on our arms. There are new foes to fight, new victories to be won, new truths to be discovered. So, having done all, we still stand as faithful sentinels on duty, as pioneers ready for service. With our loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of righteousness, with the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation, our only weapon the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God, — so we stand, praying and watching for the divine summons that bids us go forward into all truth, the truth that frees and saves.

APPENDIX.

I.

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH.

"UNITARIANS affirm that their belief is simply a return to the primitive Christian doctrines: that the teaching of Christ and his apostles, as conveyed in the New Testament, strictly conformed to the Hebrew tenet of the absolute unity of God; that for more than a century the early Christians were taught and believed this tenet; that this belief was first impaired by the speculations of the Alexandrine and Platonic schools on the mode of the divine existence and manifestations; and that the Trinitarian dogma obtained acceptance through the co-operating influences of ecclesiastical authority and imperial dictation." The whole period prior to the Council of Nice may be regarded as the Unitarian epoch of Christianity, during which the predominant opinion, however highly it exalted the Christ, stopped short of the ascription of proper deity to him. It was not till the fourth and succeeding centuries that the doctrine of the Trinity was completely formulated and established. While this continued for hundreds of years to be the orthodox view in the Church, the controversy on this point was never closed, but through the successive centuries there was an unbroken line of believers who, however differing on other points of faith, stood together as Unitarians in their opposition to the Trinity. Arianism — the view of the person of Christ which promised at one time to become the orthodox

doctrine of the Catholic Church — was a phase of Unitarianism. It is traceable down through the Middle Ages, in the persons of great schoolmen. At the Reformation, its ideas and principles were far more widely spread than is generally imagined, and, but for what we call chance, would have assumed very influential proportions in the new life of Europe. It did actually take control of a considerable section of Eastern Europe, where it has continued the dominant form of faith to this day. In the 16th century the Socini (Laelius and Faustus, uncle and nephew, of Italian birth) made a lodgment in Poland and Transylvania for the Unitarian belief, and there exist in the latter country some hundred or more Unitarian churches, together with a divinity school and university. Unitarianism is no very new *ism* in Christendom. It has existed in separate congregations in England ever since the Reformation. It is to be found among the various churches of Europe during this same period, at times bidding fair to develop into large proportions, and seriously alarming all orthodox authorities.

Organized Unitarianism in this country was the gradual outcome of rational religious thought in the Congregational and Puritan churches of New England. The movement begun by Freeman, Buckminster, Channing, and their associates, is little more than a century old. The various churches and pastors that found their way out of the old faith into more liberal modes of thinking, ostracized by their more orthodox fellow-Christians, for a time stood separate and alone, jealously guarding their individual independence, until, tiring of their isolation, they gradually came together and formed various associations for fellowship and concerted action. The body of recent years has shown considerable missionary zeal, though rather in spreading abroad its distinctive views than in planting new churches. It numbers, at present,

four hundred and sixty societies, of which two-thirds are located in the New England States. The city of Boston is the Unitarian stronghold, and has over thirty Unitarian churches. More than a hundred congregations, planted in New England previous to the War of Independence, went over to the Unitarians, including eight of the nine leading parishes of Boston, and the original church founded by the Pilgrim fathers at Plymouth, Mass. Our ministers are trained at the theological seminaries at Cambridge (Harvard University), Mass., and Meadville, Penn. The principal Unitarian journals are — the "Christian Register," published weekly at Boston, Mass. (with which "The Unitarian" and "Old and New" have recently been united), and "The Pacific Unitarian," published monthly at San Francisco. "The Hibbert Journal" is an undenominational quarterly, devoted to liberal theology, and published in London, England.

The Denominational Centre is the American Unitarian Association, a missionary and publication society; president, Samuel A. Eliot, D.D.; secretary, Rev. Charles E. St. John; assistant secretary, George W. Fox; treasurer, Francis H. Lincoln.

The Association has published a long series of books, tracts, etc., treating of the history, principles, methods and aims of the Unitarian body, which it keeps on hand in its Book-Room for sale or gratuitous distribution. It is the custodian of denominational funds, and plants and sustains missionaries and missionary movements in all parts of the United States. One feature of its work is the support of able representatives of its faith at important college centres, (Ann Arbor, Ithaca, Madison, Berkeley, etc.) The offices of the Association are in the denominational building erected for it at No. 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., at an expense of $200,000 or more.

The principal missionary and publication society for the West is the Western Unitarian Conference. Its office is at No. 175 Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.; Morton D. Hull is its president; and Rev. W. M. Backus is its secretary. The Western Conference holds an annual session in May, at some central point in the West. The Western Unitarian Sunday School Society also has its office at 175 Dearborn Street.

There are also general conferences for the Southern, Middle, and Pacific States. The Unitarian Book-Room and Headquarters in New York City are at No. 104 East 20th Street, with Rev. Geo. H. Badger as missionary superintendent. The San Francisco Book-Room is at No. 374 Sutter Street, and Rev. G. W. Stone, secretary.

The National Conference is an advisory body, meeting once in two years, usually at Saratoga, N.Y., in the month of September; president, Hon. Carroll D. Wright; secretary, Rev. Walter F. Greenman. Two thousand or more persons usually attend its sessions, at which papers are read on the leading questions of religious interest, the denominational policy is discussed, with a general exchange of ideas and sentiments.

The Ministers' Institute is held every alternate year for the free and scholarly discussion of the theological and philosophical issues of the day.

The Unitarian Sunday School Society maintains a Book-Room and Headquarters at No. 25 Beacon Street, Boston. It publishes a valuable list of manuals, orders of service, song books, and other aids in the religious education of children; also a semi-monthly paper for the young, "Every Other Sunday." Its president is Rev. Edward A. Horton, to whom communications may be addressed at No. 25 Beacon Street.

"The National Alliance of Unitarian Women," with one hundred and sixty branch or local societies, has de-

veloped much missionary activity among the women of the Unitarian fellowship. It aids struggling churches and missionaries, and interests itself especially in the extension of the Post-Office Mission, a characteristic and important agency for distributing Unitarian literature and spreading liberal principles through advertisement and correspondence. Miss Emma C. Low is president, and Mrs. Mary B. Davis secretary, of the Alliance.

There is also a large number of local conferences, women's auxiliary associations, Sunday-School societies, Young People's Guilds and Clubs.

In addition to these Unitarian organizations, there are over seven hundred Universalist churches in America holding the same or similar views, and nearly two thousand societies of the Christian denomination, in more or less general agreement on cardinal points as held by Unitarians. In England we find about three hundred Unitarian societies. Their denominational centre is the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, with offices at Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, London. Rev. W. Copeland Bowie is the secretary and general organizer. In Hungary there are one hundred and nine Unitarian congregations, each with a school attached. Our form of faith has existed for three hundred years in that country. In France, Italy, Holland, and Switzerland, the liberal wing of the Protestant churches holds the same form of faith. In Germany, where a State Church prevents the formation of specially Unitarian organizations, there is a large element among both Lutherans and Evangelicals which publicly avows its sympathy with the liberal theology. The *Protestantenverein*, its principal Association, has many branch associations. In Switzerland the *Verein fuer freies Christentum* is our powerful ally. Even in far-off India the liberal Christian Church has a noble ally in the Brahmo Somaj, or society of Hindu Theists.

A successful lodgment for the Unitarian faith has in late years been made in Japan.

The International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, organized in Boston in 1900, held largely attended meetings in London in 1901, and in Amsterdam in 1903; and will meet in September, 1905, in Geneva. Fifteen nationalities and twenty-one church connections are represented in its membership. Prof. H. Oort, Leyden, Holland, is the president; and Rev. Charles W. Wendte, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., is the general secretary.

II. THE UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP.

The Unitarian lays no stress on the public profession of religious belief, he points to no long roll of converts added to the true faith, he takes no pleasure in showy ecclesiasticism or church extension. His pride is rather in the cultured minds, the well rounded characters, the gracious lives, the notable examples of uprightness, humanity, and piety which his form of faith contributes, to illustrate the perfections and swell the triumphs of the religion of Jesus.

Among the representative men and women who in modern times, and in this country and in England, have belonged to the Unitarian fellowship, we may instance the following.

Among religious teachers, theologians, and preachers —

Wm. Ellery Channing.	Andrews Norton.	Noah Worcester
James Freeman.	Henry Ware, Sr.	George W. Burnap.
J. T. Kirkland.	Henry Ware, Jr.	W. O. B. Peabody.
William Ware.	Alvan Lamson.	Nath. L. Frothingham
Jared Sparks.	Aaron Bancroft.	Convers Francis.
Samuel Gilman.	W. F. P. Greenwood.	Ephraim Peabody.

Charles T. Brooks.
Edmund H. Sears.
James Walker.
Ezra S. Gannett.
George R. Noyes.
Orville Dewey.
Charles Follen.
Samuel J. May.
Thomas Hill.
George E. Ellis.
Samuel Longfellow.
William H. Channing.
William J. Potter.
Charles Low.
George W. Hosmer.
John Weiss.
Henry Giles.
Abiel A. Livermore.
Oliver Stearns.
Samuel Johnson.
Franklin C. Southworth.
A. D. Mayo.
Edward H. Hall.
Nicholas P. Gilman.
George L. Cary.
James T. Bixby.
Samuel R. Calthrop.
Francis Tiffany.
Wm. W. Fenn.

John Bidle.
Theophilus Lindsey.
Joseph Priestley.
James Martineau.
F. W. Newman.
Charles Beard.
Alexander Gordon.
Stopford A. Brooke.
J. Estlin Carpenter.
H. W. Crosskey.
James Drummond.
John Page Hopps.
G. Vance Smith.
T. Hamilton Thom.
P. H. Wicksteed.
Richard Armstrong.
Brooke Herford.
W. Copeland Bowie.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (once a Unitarian minister in Boston).
J. G. Palfrey.
Theodore Parker.
John Pierpont.
Frederic H. Hedge.
James Freeman Clarke.
Henry W. Bellows.
A. P. Peabody.
Thomas Starr King.
Wm. R. Alger.
O. B. Frothingham.
Chas. H. Brigham.
Wm. G. Eliot.
C. A. Bartol.
Robert Collyer.
Joseph H. Allen.
Edward Everett Hale.
Grindall Reynolds.
Horatio Stebbins.
C. C. Everett.
Wm. H. Furness.
Francis G. Peabody.
Minot J. Savage.
John W. Chadwick.
George Batchelor.
Thomas L. Eliot.
Samuel A. Eliot.
Jenkin Lloyd Jones.
Henry M. Simmons.
Thomas Van Ness.
Theodore C. Williams.
Jabez T. Sunderland.
Merle St. Croix Wright.
Howard N. Brown.
William C. Gannett.
Frederick L. Hosmer.

Thomas R. Slicer.
Paul R. Frothingham.
Charles G. Ames.
Charles E. St. John.
Joseph May.
Samuel M. Crothers.
Edward A. Horton.
Edward Cummings.
James DeNormandie.
Rush R. Shippen.
Mrs. Julia Ward Howe.
Mrs. Mary Livermore.
Charles F. Dole.
George A. Thayer.
J. H. Crooker.
Wm. H. Lyon,

and many others notable as thinkers, scholars, and preachers.[1]

Also the following philanthropists and reformers: —

Miss Mary Carpenter.
Miss Dorothea Dix.
Dr. Noah Worcester.
Dr. S. G. Howe.
Dr. James Jackson.
Samuel J. May.
Edward Everett Hale.
Henry W. Bellows (Pres. of the U. S. Sanitary Commission).
Miss Elizabeth P. Peabody.
Mrs. Humphry Ward.
Frank B. Sanborn.
John Pounds (founder of Ragged Schools in England).
Abbott and Amos Lawrence.
Peter Cooper.
Joseph Tuckerman.
Charles F. Barnard.
Samuel J. Barrows.
Edwin D. Mead.
Henry Bergh.
Ezra Cornell.
William H. Baldwin.
Enoch Pratt.
John Lowell.
Theodore D. Weld.
Henry P. Kidder.
Miss Mary A. Livermore.
Mrs. Mary Hemenway.
Mrs. Lucretia Mott.
Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton.
Mrs. Josephine Shaw Lowell.
Mrs. Angelina Grimke Weld.
Miss Susan B. Anthony.
Mrs. Lucy Stone Blackwell.
Mrs. Julia Ward Howe.

Among scientists and educators we may mention: —

The Darwin family.
Dr. Samuel Clarke.
Dr. Joseph Priestley.
Richard Porson.
Dr. Nathaniel Lardner.
David Hartley.
Jeremy Bentham.
Francis Hutcheson.

[1] The compiler of this list apologizes for its inadequacy. He might justly have added the names of many other clergymen well known among us for their learning, piety, and efficient services to Unitarian Christianity.— C. W. W.

David Ricardo.
Sir Charles Lyell.
Dr. William B. Carpenter.
Professor De Morgan.
Josiah Wedgwood.
Sir W. Fairbairn.
Mrs. Mary Somerville.
Benjamin Franklin.
Miss Maria Mitchell.
Nathaniel Bowditch.
Horace Mann.
Loammi Baldwin.
John Fiske.

Charles W. Eliot (and the previous seven presidents of Harvard College, and many of its leading professors, such as),
Thomas Hill.
Jeffries Wyman.
Asaph Hall.
Edward C. Pickering.
Benj. A. Gould.
Joseph Lovering.
Benjamin Pierce.
Wolcott Gibbs.
C. C. Felton.
Louis Agassiz.

A long and brilliant line of statesmen, jurists, and public officers have belonged to this faith: among them, four presidents of the United States: —

Thomas Jefferson.
John Adams.
John Quincy Adams.
Millard Fillmore.
Vice-President Hannibal Hamlin.
Alexander H. Everett.
Edward Everett (once a Unitarian minister).
Samuel Dexter.
Christopher Gore.
Fisher Ames.
Harrison Gray Otis.
Charles Sumner.
Daniel Webster (for thirty years a pew-owner and communicant at Brattle Street Unitarian Church, Boston).

Henry Wheaton.
Charles Francis Adams.
Josiah Quincy.
George F. and E. R. Hoar.
John C. Calhoun.
Dorman B. Eaton.
Nathaniel Dane.
George William Curtis.
Thomas Dawes Eliot.
John P. Hale.
William B. Allison.
Leland Stanford.
Wm. H. Taft.
Henry B. Anthony.
William E. Chandler.
Justin D. Morrill.
Carroll D. Wright,

and many other Cabinet officers, United States Senators, Congressmen, and men prominent in national politics.

Among Jurists we lay claim to: —

John Marshall, Chief Justice United States Supreme Court.
Joseph Story, Associate Justice.
James Moore Wayne, Associate Justice.
John A. Campbell, Associate Justice.
Samuel F. Miller and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Associate Justices United States Supreme Court.
Theophilus Parsons, Chief Justice Supreme Court, Massachusetts.
Lemuel Shaw, Chief Justice Supreme Court, Massachusetts.
George T. Bigelow, Chief Justice Supreme Court, Massachusetts.
John Wells, Chief Justice Supreme Court, Massachusetts.
Pliny Myrick, Chief Justice Supreme Court, Massachusetts.
Walbridge A. Field, Chief Justice Supreme Court, Massachusetts.
Charles Allen, Justice Supreme Court, Massachusetts.
Ebenezer R. Hoar, Justice Supreme Court, Massachusetts.
Seth Ames, Justice Supreme Court, Massachusetts.
Benjamin F. Thomas, Justice Supreme Court, Massachusetts.
Samuel S. Wilde, Justice Supreme Court, Massachusetts.
Levi Lincoln, Justice Supreme Court, Massachusetts.
John Lowell, Justice United States Court.
Chief Justice Henry A. Bellows, New Hampshire.
Chief Justice Cushing of New Hampshire.
Chief Justice Jeremiah Smith, New Hampshire.
Chief Justice Charles Doe, New Hampshire.
Chief Justice John Appleton, Maine.
John Lathrop, Justice Supreme Court of Mass.
Judge Jeremiah Smith, New Hampshire.
Judge Asa Fowler, New Hampshire.
W. H. Beatty, Chief Justice Supreme Court, California.
Oscar L. Shafter, Justice Supreme Court, California.
Solomon Lincoln.
James C. Carter.
George Ticknor Curtis.

with hundreds of others hardly less eminent.

Among Governors we recall: —

John Davis, Massachusetts.
John H. Clifford, Massachusetts.
John A. Andrew, Massachusetts.
Levi Lincoln, Massachusetts.
George S. Boutwell, Massachusetts.
John D. Long, Massachusetts.
Thomas Talbot, Massachusetts.

George D. Robinson, Massachusetts.
J. Q. A. Brackett, Massachusetts.
Oliver Ames, Massachusetts.
F. T. Greenhalge, Massachusetts.
Roger Wolcott, Massachusetts.
Edward Kent, Maine.
Onslow Stearns, New Hampshire.
Charles H. Bell, New Hampshire.
Benjamin F. Prescott, New Hampshire.
Governor Lippitt, Rhode Island.
Ichabod Goodwin, New Hampshire.
Alphonso Taft, Ohio.
George Hoadly, Ohio.
Charles Robinson, Kansas.
John T. Bagley, Michigan.

Among leaders in commerce, names that occur to us are: —

Thomas H. Perkins.
Harrison Gray Otis.
Amos Lawrence.
John Amory Lowell.
John C. Amory.
Jonathan Phillips.
Thomas Wigglesworth.
J. Huntington Wolcott.
Augustus Hemenway.
Stephen C. Phillips.
Thomas Tileston.
Ezra Cornell.
Jonas G. Clark.
Stephen Salisbury.
Robert G. Shaw.
M. E. Ingalls.
Nathan Appleton.
Abbott Lawrence.
Samuel A. Eliot.
Peter C. Brooks.
Nathaniel Thayer.
John E. Forbes.
Elisha Atkins.
Henry P. Kidder.
William Endicott, Jr.
Peter Cooper.
George Partridge.
Enoch Pratt.
Moses H. Grinnell.
A. A. Low.
Horace Davis.
Wm. H. Baldwin, Jr.

American literature and art are thoroughly Unitarian. Two-thirds of the eminent names on our list of authors belong to this faith; namely: —

Four of our leading poets, —

William Cullen Bryant.
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.
James Russell Lowell.
Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Seven leading historians, —

George Bancroft.
J. Lothrop Motley.
W. H. Prescott.
Richard Hildreth.
Francis Parkman.
Jared Sparks.
John G. Palfrey.

Artists like Fanny Kemble, Charlotte Cushman, Harriet Hosmer, W. W. Story, Jas. E. Murdock, Larkin G. Mead, and Daniel C. French, and a great number of the favorite names in American literature, such as: —

Ralph Waldo Emerson.
E. P. Whipple.
Jones Very.
George Ticknor.
Charles Sprague.
Sylvester Judd.
H. T. Tuckerman.
Bayard Taylor.
Louisa M. Alcott.
Bret Harte.
Margaret Fuller.
Mrs. Kirkland.
Lydia Maria Child.
Charles Eliot Norton.
Julia Ward Howe.
Henry Thoreau.
Miss Sedgwick.
Mrs. Follen.
Charles T. Brooks.
Mrs. Edna D. Cheney.
John Weiss.
F. J. Child.
George Ripley.
Charles W. Upham.
James T. Fields.
Nathaniel Hawthorne.
William W. Story.
George S. Hillard.
David A. Wasson.
Helen Hunt Jackson.
Christopher C. Cranch.
Grace Greenwood.
J. T. Trowbridge.
Thomas W. Higginson.
Harriet Prescott Spofford.
Caroline D. Henty.
John W. Chadwick.
Edward Everett Hale.
Edward R. Sill.
R. H. Stoddard.
John S. Dwight.

In England we find the following Unitarian authors: —

Sir Matthew Hale.
Mark Akenside.
Judge Talfourd.
Mrs. Barbauld.
Leigh Hunt and Charles Lamb (in opinion).
Joanna Baillie.
Sarah Hazlitt.
Lady Byron.
Sir. Wm. Jones.
Wm. Roscoe.
Samuel Rogers.
Frances P. Cobbe.
Mrs. Humphrey Ward.
Mrs. Gaskell.
Charles Dickens.

Sir John Bowring, the distinguished statesman, and writer of notable hymns like "In the cross of Christ I glory;"

Mrs. Sarah Flower Adams, author of "Nearer, my God, to Thee;"

Helen M. Williams, who wrote "While Thee I seek, protecting Power."

While the foregoing list does not lay claim to absolute correctness, it is below rather than above the truth, since one even more favorable to the Unitarian cause could be made.

Besides this enumeration of prominent persons connected, in times past or present, with the Unitarian body, there is still a larger number who, while not belonging to our fellowship, have avowed Unitarian sentiments. Among these were — the philosopher John Locke; the Quaker William Penn, who, in his "Sandy Foundations Shaken," wrote against the Trinity, although when imprisoned for so doing he afterwards recanted; and Sir Isaac Newton, whose creed was as follows: —

"There is one God, the Father, ever living, omnipresent, omniscient, Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. The Father is the invisible God, whom no eye hath seen or can see. . . . Christ came not to diminish the worship of his Father. . . . It is not necessary to salvation to direct our prayers to any other than the Father, in the name of the Son."

The great English poet John Milton was an unbeliever in the Trinity, however orthodox his creed may have been in other respects; and the devout hymnist Dr. Watts wrote not long before his death, "Surely I ought to know the God whom I worship, — whether he be a pure and simple being, or whether Thou art a threefold Deity, consisting of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. . . . The Deity is not made up of three such distinct and separate spirits."[1]

Of eminent Americans, not Unitarians, we may cite the following declarations as evidence of substantial sympathy with our views. George Washington wrote: —

[1] A Solemn Address to the Deity.

"I am not less ardent in my wish that you may succeed in your toleration in religious matters. Being no bigot myself to any mode of worship, I am disposed to indulge the professors of Christianity in the church with that road to heaven which to them shall seem the most direct, plainest, easiest, and least liable to exception."

Dr. Abercrombie, rector of the Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, which Washington, when President, attended, says, "Washington was a Deist." Thomas Jefferson[1] bears similar testimony.

Rev. Dr. Wilson, an eminent Episcopal clergyman of Albany, N. Y., half a century ago published an article in the daily "Advertiser" of that city, of October 29, 1831, in which, after a most thorough investigation of Washington's religious belief, he is compelled to make this confession: —

"I have perused *every line* that Washington ever gave to the public, and I do not find *one impression* in which he pledges himself as a professor of Christianity. [That is, according to Dr. Wilson's orthodox interpretation of Christianity.] I think *any* man who will candidly do as I have done will come to the conclusion that he was a Deist and nothing more."

Benjamin's Franklin's creed was as follows: —

"I believe in one God, the Creator of the universe; that he governs it by his providence; that he ought to be worshipped; that the most acceptable service we render to him is doing good to his other children; that the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound religion. As to Jesus of Nazareth, I think his system of morals and his religion, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw, or is likely to see; but I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes, and I have, with most of the present Dissenters of England, some doubts of his Divinity; though it is a question I do not dogmatize upon, having never studied it, and think it needless to busy myself with it now, when I expect soon an opportunity of knowing the truth with less trouble."

[1] Works, vol. iv. p. 572.

While in England, Franklin attended the Unitarian services of Rev. Thomas Belsham at Essex Chapel, London, and its records show that he was one of the regular contributors to the support of that place of worship.

The religious views of Thomas Jefferson are well known to have been even more radical than those of Franklin. At the Unitarian Building in Boston may be seen framed an autograph letter of Jefferson's, reading as follows: —

MONTICELLO, Jan. 18, 1824.

I THANK you, Sir, for the copy you have been so kind as to send me of the rev[d] mr. Bancroft's Unitarian sermons. I have read them with great satisfaction, and always rejoice in efforts to restore us to primitive Christianity, in all the simplicity in which it came from the lips of Jesus. had it never been sophisticated by the subtleties of Commentators, nor paraphrased into meanings totally foreign to its character, it would at this day have been the religion of the whole civilised world. but the metaphysical abstractions of Athanasius, and the maniac ravings of Calvin, tinctured plentifully with the foggy dreams of Plato, have so loaded it with absurdities and incomprehensibilities as to drive into infidelity men who had not time, patience or opportunity to strip it of it's meretricious trappings and to see it in all it's native simplicity and purity. I trust, however, that the same free exercise of private judgment which gave us our political reformation, will extend it's effects to that of religion, which the present volume is well calculated to encourage and promote. . . .

TH. JEFFERSON.

On hearing a sermon by Dr. Channing, Jefferson wrote: "I trust that there is not a young man now in the United States who will not die a Unitarian."

Thomas Paine's creed was as follows: —

"I believe in one God and no more, and I hope for happiness beyond this life. I believe in the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy. The true Deist has but one Deity, and his

religion consists in contemplating his power, wisdom, and benignity, and in endeavoring to imitate him in everything moral, scientific, and mechanical."

The noble Italian agitator, Mazzini, was, in religion, a Unitarian Theist. So also was Emilio Castelar, the eloquent Spanish leader; and Louis Kossuth, the eminent Hungarian liberator, said not long before his death to a friend (Professor John Kovaçs, of Kolosvar College): "The Unitarian faith is the only faith which has a future; the only one that can influence the intelligent and interest the indifferent."

Concerning Abraham Lincoln, the author of "Six Months at the White House" writes: —

"The conversation turned upon religious subjects, and Mr. Lincoln made this impressive remark: 'I have never united myself to any church, because I have found difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their Articles of Belief and Confessions of Faith. When any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, the Saviour's condensed statement of the substance of both Law and Gospel, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself," that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul.'"

Such a church the Unitarian at least tries to maintain.

Similar extracts from the writings and biographies of eminent men might be multiplied; but in closing this note it is only necessary to allude to the Unitarian principles of members of the other great liberal sects. Such are Dr. Hosea Ballou, Horace Greeley, Dr. E. H. Chapin, and other past and present members of the Universalist communion; Robert Dale Owen, Wm. Lloyd Garrison, and other leading Spiritualists; Elias Hicks, J. G. Whittier, Lucretia Mott, and the Progressive Friends; Prof. David Swing, Dr. H. W. Thomas, Mrs. Elizabeth

Thompson, Gerrit Smith, President David Starr Jordan, Prof. Joseph Le Conte of the Church Universal, besides many liberal Jews.

Truly, this is a goodly fellowship. Take these away and American society would have lost its savor, its chiefest inspiration and encouragement. A faith that can satisfy such illustrious minds, and inspire such gracious lives, must have in it the power to redeem and sanctify humanity. And those who belong to the Unitarian communion may have the grateful sense that, though their fellowship is still small numerically considered, it yet includes so large a portion of the culture, virtue, and piety of America.

A purer Christianity, however slowly, is to take the place of that which bears but its name. Cannot we become heralds of this better day? Let our hearts bid it welcome! Let our lives reveal its beauty and its power. — Dr. Wm. Ellery Channing.

Unitarianism is that free and progressive development of historic Christianity which aspires to be synonymous with universal ethics and universal religion. — Rev. Samuel J. Barrows.

Our (Unitarian) problem is not primarily intellectual but moral. It is the reconciliation of the Spirit of Truth with the Spirit of Devotion. . . . Our task is to bring together thought and reverence, the fearless mind and the uplifted heart. — Rev. A. W. Jackson.

The work of Unitarianism is not done. It is scarcely begun. Our cause is in its early Spring, not in its late Fall. — Rev. J. T. Sunderland.

The truths ye urge are borne abroad
  By every wind and tide;
The voice of Nature and of God
  Speaks out upon your side.

The weapons which your hands have found
  Are those which heaven hath wrought,
Light, Truth, and Love; — your battle-ground
  The free, broad field of Thought.

Rev. Samuel Longfellow.

In the love of truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man. — *Basis of Union of many Unitarian Churches.*

THE CHURCH OF THE TWO COMMANDMENTS.

These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

And we invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims. — *Basis of Fellowship of the General Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches.*

[No. 9]

UNITARIANISM:

WHAT DOES IT STAND FOR?

BY

REV. E. A. HORTON.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

WHAT DOES UNITARIANISM STAND FOR?

I OFFER THEE THREE THINGS. — 2 *Samuel*, xxiv. 12.

It is my purpose to answer, as far as I can, this question: *What does Unitarianism stand for?* What does it, as a movement, offer to the world, amid the various contributions of other religious denominations? Every important phase in the evolution of Christianity has brought a distinct and needed emphasis on some doctrine, form, tendency, or work, and in that specific function has the existence of that particular movement been justified. Luther offered a plea for Justification by Faith; Calvin dwelt on Divine Decrees; Wesley poured forth a fervid proclamation of man's free-will and gospel grace; Roman Catholicism enforces works and church infallibility; Episcopacy upholds Christian unity in liturgical confessions, with Apostolic Succession, — and thus we might readily assign to the numerous branches their peculiar fruit. Unitarianism stands for a threefold mission, not of finished events, or completed thought, but a mission of spirit and elements. It offers these three things: 1. The Love of Truth; 2. Enthusiasm for Humanity; 3. The Spirit of Jesus. The love of truth as contrasted with the love of dogma or tenet; enthusiasm for humanity as opposed to selfish salvation and derogatory views of this world and man's nature; the spirit of Jesus as set against metaphysical statements of his rank and mission, and discipleship by mere profession. Plant these spirit-

ual forces in the individual, and the result must be progress toward strong symmetrical character. Give them scope in society, and they make for freedom, equity, and fraternity. Put them vigorously at work in the church of any belief, and there follow, as the day the night, more life, the spirit of loving inclusiveness, and true progress. Being forces and not forms, they live on. By virtue of their fluent and adaptable nature they serve to unite different minds and to sway varying rituals. It is asked of Unitarianism: "How are your churches held together, since no creed or common code of doctrine and no ecclesiastical authority are visible?" We are an humble forerunner of the Universal Church, which, when it rises, must be held together by such ties as those that so successfully unite us. No other kind of union is desirable; no other is possible for the future. But let us examine successively each one of these "three things."

First, *The Love of Truth.*

There is urgent need of a denomination at all times to stand for the honest, heroic search for truth. I do no injustice to the churches of Christendom when I say that they do not stand for this, and are willing to have it known; they esteem their position the safe and sacred one. Question them and they reply in clear tones for all the world to hear: "We have found the truth, and the revelation is closed. To attempt to think beyond, around, or over this revealed truth is irreligious and endangering to the soul's future welfare. There is a conflict irrepressible between God's truth and man's devices." To this Unitarianism unflinchingly replies with an assertion of a continuous revelation and the sacredness of all truth. God is one, his truth is one; man's needs are fed by constant gifts of truth from experience, history, science, and art. Old truth always suffers unless helped out by the new. It cannot do its

work if left alone in supposed supernatural isolation. This was conspicuously the purpose of Jesus. "I am come to be a witness to the truth," he said, to instil a passion for it into man's heart until it should reign supreme over sloth and pride and bigotry of intellect; and standing between two civilizations, between the old and the new dispensations, he cried, "I seek to fulfil;" and they stoned him. "I come to give you perpetual freedom in the fulfilling of law, usage, and ancient commandment;" and they crucified him. This is the vast world-picture of the ever-recurring struggle in man's life and in the church's history. Those are disloyal to old truths who fiercely guard them from all changes. While they watch the creeds and waste the opportunities, the seed-time of sowing passes, and the new harvest is postponed. Those are loyal and true servants of "the faith" who fulfil it from generation to generation, by new interpretations, noble enrichments, and wise reconstructions.

The love of truth in and for itself, the love of truth in all its breadth and power, is essential; for the tyranny of creeds is not ended. That old protest of Channing and early Unitarianism must still sound out over the land, rebuking the perversion of Christianity into doctrinal finalities. The evil is a real and gigantic one; it creates a terrible injustice; it converts living religion into an affair of memory and fluency; it sets bounds to the free course of God's spirit; it fastens premature old age on the young mind and removes the grandest incentive in man's nature, his search for truth; it dwarfs the sentiments of wonder and aspiration; it tends to substitute a shallow pietistic self-satisfaction for the contrite, humble spirit of the true disciple of Jesus Christ. Of a verity the truth does make us free; for first of all statements as to the nature of the Supreme Being is this: "God is Truth." Before Love, or Wisdom, or

Goodness, or Law, or Omnipotence, his identity with Truth is the beginning. If, then, we have truth we have God; and the more of it, the more like him are we; free from fear, superstition, deadness, deceit, error, — free in the degree and potency of the working of that truth in us. But the love of it is the chief thing.

From a newly-made grave I hear a voice; it blends with my utterance and leads it: "Let us strive to see things as they are." It is the message of one who spoke concerning "sweetness and light;" who carried on his work of emancipating the religious mind from Philistinism, with a sincere, brave loyalty; who called us all to be "friends of the spirit," and to live in the spirit. Matthew Arnold loved truth and sought it, and led others along the noble path.

Imbued with this ardor, behold how religion gains allies of unsurpassed eminence! She marshals a fraternity of choice souls, consecrated to the unselfish service of science and humanity; the teachings of the pulpit cease to conflict with the evidences of modern thought; fellowship is determined by aim and spirit, not by shibboleth and theology; the starry names of such as Newton, Herschel, Faraday, Agassiz, Darwin, Spencer, and the host of poets, teachers, investigators, reformers, philosophers, are given proud place on the banners of the church militant. Unitarianism has ever said, and continues to say with stronger accent, that no adequate presentation of religion can be made, if the re-enforcement of modern thought, and theory, and investigation is omitted. Religion by native right claims all the truth that can be found; for with all that is obtainable, the prosecution of its work still moves feebly forward. Train your children in knowledge and accomplishments; educate them to be strong in life pursuits, but above all make them lovers of truth; out of it will spring veracity and sincerity; by it will come the elixir of perpetual

youth; through it shall they find their best contribution to the world; for he who loves truth despises cant and artificial conditions; his soul is the centre of integrity, honesty and justice.

The next principle for which Unitarianism stands is *Enthusiasm for Humanity.*

By this I mean the acceptance of mankind as we find it, seeing no primeval curse on our race, deploring its vice and error, admiring its struggles toward the light, viewing all peoples past and present as children of God, quickening our faith in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man into an inspiration for the work of building the kingdom of God here in the world. Not simply a "love of souls," as the old phrase ran, but a love of men as men, a love that seeks to make salvation something realizable here and now. This enthusiasm has been manifest in Unitarian character and institutions. Our faith tends to philanthropy, to moral education, to charities of a permanent kind.

We believe in Home Missions chiefly, not because we lack humanitarian zeal, but because we have it in such abundance. The Foreign Mission work as conducted is a wasteful system, having for its object the saving of souls from future punishment. It is not a genuine form of Christ's enthusiasm for humanity. We seek to touch with his helpfulness, the sick, the poor, the ignorant, the wilful, the buffeted, and give them health, comfort, education, consecration, and peace.

We claim for this principle that it accomplishes many valuable results along religious lines. Sects have had it, and have it now, but it is obscured and impaired by restrictions, covered by theological eclipses. Given its due prominence as a cardinal element in the conduct of churches, it has this merit of beginning at the beginning. "First the natural, then that which is spiritual." Very much of the current religious method consists in begin-

ning at the end, or the middle, or at some point where results are painfully unchristian. I refer to habits like the following: assuming that conversion is complete and final at some prayer-meeting; warning people that if they do not accept the Bible literally, from lid to lid, they shall surely be lost; frowning upon natural doubts and questionings as being almost the unpardonable sin; picturing the future life as a place where it may be desirable and certainly possible to disown our present noble affections and ties; stigmas cast continually on man's native traits and his original nature. These, and others, and the whole drift of the assumption of man's fall and depravity and his need of vicarious help, I earnestly deprecate, for they tend to turn the genuine love of human kind (in its natural state so real, even if intermittent) into a fictitious, feverish other-worldliness. Human life is the great commentary. Studied sympathetically, it yields to the theologian his ripest wisdom, as it has always furnished the philosopher his chief supply of truth. Human nature is the revelation of divinity, and the strong arguments of religion to-day are taken from the soul. The Unitarian entertains no effervescent enthusiasm for man; he expects to be bound by the logic of his plea, and he accepts the consequences. One is, if we have such faith in human nature we must trust reason and conscience and all the faculties. We do. We not only trust them, but we call on men to use them fearlessly and fully; to rely on them more and more, and thus train one generation after another into clearer thought, stronger ethical sense, a disciplined imagination, steadier judgment, and mightier will. It is the distrust of our right and our ability to reason and act, sown by Calvinism, that cripples Christendom. A semi-distrust, for there is a partial confidence, and a half-way exercise of our faculties in religion, since men could not be the slaves even that they are, of dogma and

superstition, without some thinking and some listening to conscience.

But let us consider another aspect of this enthusiasm for humanity. Unitarianism contends that only by this way do we effectually reach such a spiritual principle as love to God, reach it to realize it. This is only old truth, unfortunately lost along the path of historic Christianity; but Unitarianism, as a whole, is simply a return to the Founder of Christianity, and it claims an age coeval with him. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" The difficulty of thinking of God and so apprehending him as to make the love of him real and abiding, presses upon all. He is spirit, all-diffused, infinite, how can man love a being so vast and omnipresent, in the kindling, satisfying sense of that word? Here is the solution: love humanity, work for it, enter into its joys and sorrows, be responsive to its hopes and fears, its sins and virtues, its shame and glory, and you shall find God at every turn; yea, you shall find Christ in every path coming to meet you.

This gives the church a true object, and justifies its reason for being. Churches must not be mere hospitals for the spiritually ill, or forts for theological warfare, or clubs where pew-holders enjoy fine music and essays; they must serve as centres of moral and religious activities prolonged from day to day throughout the week; their pulpits must be the seats of teachers with living messages, their pews filled with large-hearted worshippers. Religion must address itself more and more to the work of creating an environment, and less and less to the sectarian "rescue" of separate lives. It must provide institutions, foster religious training, mould society, and so uphold the continuity of influence as to make the child of each generation more responsive to religious impressions. Unitarianism emphasizes enthu-

siasm for humanity because it conduces to patriotism, and calls forth the highest types of character. He lives a mean life who is not guided by the great sentiment of love of country; and he is sure of a meagre career who fails to admire and follow the examples of the country's martyrs and leaders. This enthusiasm is pure and ennobling; it lifts our lives up into large, magnanimous outlines. Let us take courage; there is progress in the world. "The selfishness of modern times exists in defiance of morality; in ancient times it was approved, sheltered, and even in part enjoined by morality." Little by little the usage of arbitration between nations and parties enlarges its humane work; with deepened love of humanity comes the better care of the rights of children and the prevention of cruelty to our poor relations in the animal world. The "solidarity of the race" is a scientific fact, matched by the truth of the oneness in heredity of the human family. Let Christendom recognize this principle more and more, and mass its forces for a new crusade against actual tyranny, sin, and superstition!

The last of the "three things" offered by Unitarianism is *The Spirit of Jesus.*

Many creeds and churches teach and enforce this, but always with such qualifications and attachments as to render our position most needful. We ask that this shall be the supreme and final test of discipleship. We insist that the right of communion, the eligibility to church membership, the recognition of esteem, shall be governed by this searching and satisfying test. Atrocities have been perpetrated in the name of the Prince of Peace; declarations of holiness have been employed as disguises for hypocrisy; invidious and harmful distinctions have been made between the "elect" and the ungathered; a Christian has been classified as one who accepted the doctrine that Jesus was very God. Slowly

a revolt is spreading against this baneful idea. It is fraught with as much danger to the perpetuity of Christianity as it is full of injury to the steady growth of morality. "A string of opinions," said Wesley, "is no more Christian faith than a string of beads is Christian practice." Christ-likeness is the living reproduction of his spirit, the attempt to follow his methods, to share his hope, to fill our daily orbits of duty with light and love, — not to say long prayers, or bow at the mention of his name, or deem sectarian warfare a "standing up" for him.

What surprises await the zealots of this life as they shall pass on, this world's affairs receding, and the future existence dawning? If we may judge by the plain teachings of Jesus, not those who have cried Lord! Lord! most diligently, but those who have tried to do the will of the Father, shall be called nearest to him. Am I told that the barriers are being lowered, that liberal constructions are placed on terms of fellowship, that arbitrary tests are diminishing? Yes, in certain localities where our influence has made impression; but for the most part, Christendom is in bondage to the spurious gospel of the letter, — and the letter kills. We plead for the breadth and inclusion that can come only by the spirit. Lift this principle into constant practice, and the contradictions of the texts of Scripture fall away. "The words of Jesus are of no special value except as vehicles of his spirit;" scholars have pored over his utterances to find occult prophecies, or to prove elaborate doctrines, or to substantiate the claim of his equality with Deity. The Sermon on the Mount, the parables, the Beatitudes, are unmistakably his, and are radiant with his spirit. "The prevalent feeling toward Jesus among religious men is an awful fear of his supernatural greatness, and a disposition to obey his commands, arising partly from dread of future punishment

and hope of reward, and partly from a nobler feeling of loyalty, which, however, is inspired rather by his office than his person." We need to pass by the representatives, at whose hands we so often suffer, and seek the Leader himself. Around that personality, so loving, so sacrificing, so stainless, shall group the churches and the souls aspiring. Christian unity is not feasible within purely theological bounds. Men cannot be made to think alike; they ought not to think alike; with the advance of the world goes the differentiation of types; and the manifoldness of life is sure to express itself in new denominations. Unitarianism calls attention to the only possible and desirable basis of union, that of life and work in the spirit of Jesus. It is a spirit that, judged by fair canons of criticism and estimate, is full of "sweet reasonableness;" it tends to create in human hearts the reign of buoyant obedience; it calls nothing accursed, but with heavenly sympathy turns the crude prose of trial into spiritual poetry; against the recriminative habits of the world it opposes a serene, reserved dignity and grace, born of consecration; it bids the theologian sell his controversial sword, and buy in its place the implements of the kingdom of peace and good-will; it asserts the greatness of man as a child of God, and his supremacy over institutions and days and traditions; it calls on the messengers of religion to be catholic, fraternal, self-forgetting. This spirit is congenial to true liberty and equality; it aims to hush cannon and stay the devastating work of war; wherever it finds fit scope, there arise the blessings of industry, of education, of freedom, of just laws.

Unitarianism claims to have a positive, large, loving, reverential allegiance to Jesus, and it knows no truer way of showing that loyalty than by endeavoring to make this life and spirit the central fact. We do not deem his death and the shedding of blood the principal

thing. We do not care to cross-examine seekers after the religious life as to their theories of Christ's nature, his miracles, and final ascension. It is our belief that the love of God revealed in him is commensurate with human needs at all times and in all lands. A prominent Trinitarian clergyman declared from his pulpit, in evasion of the puzzling question, "What is the fate of the heathen?" — "I do not care where they are; I do not trouble myself about dead pagans." That is not the spirit of Christ; I venture the assertion that many buried peoples called heathen could show more vital religion than finds expression in such a representative of Christianity. All races, all mankind, are God's children, — infants in civilization or mature. How are we likely to appear — we so boastful of our attainments — in the eyes of our descendants five hundred years from now? The Christ-spirit includes all mankind, and judges the least-favored races the more charitably. By our light are we tried.

This struggling world of man is poorly aided by the Christian Church. Humanity asks for the bread of life and it receives stones of dogmas; it craves the "good news" of a divine friend in Jesus, — the giver of peace, the victor over troubles, the healer, — and instead obtains from "orthodox" teachers tidings of condemnation, wrath, alienation, and disgrace. The "masses" and the thinkers alike look for a highway of the Lord so plain and pleasant that nothing but their own wilfulness shall debar them from treading it; to their dismay the road of righteousness is hedged about with ecclesiastical obstacles and bristles with menaces. Average religion is pervaded with Calvin's austere temper, not with the grace and love of Jesus. Of all things most needed, this of the revival of the spirit is foremost. In its humble career Unitarianism has stood for it and will stand until its mission is finished through other and larger instru-

mentalities. It is the permanent and unchanging, "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Theology must inevitably alter, conceptions of the universe shall change, modes of worship and forms of activity shall be transformed, but who can conceive of this spirit of love to God and love to man ever waning, or this type of divine humanity ever losing its leadership?

To such as may heed, Unitarianism offers these three things: the love of truth, enthusiasm for humanity, the spirit of Jesus; offers them in no narrow channels, but casts them out over literature, life, reform, and theology; hides them by trained character in the three measures of society, politics, science, or gives them free course over the land by books, tracts, and missions. Around these principles all elements of Unitarianism rally; in these tendencies exists cohesive power sufficient for our organized existence as a denomination. Let us refrain from demanding more, but let us defend these as our common inheritance. Each adherent or each church may rightfully elaborate, define, add, or formulate, within these principles; but as a body let us stand for these in their inspiring simplicity, — grand and enduring in their very simplicity.

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; 21 full-page illustrations; price, $2.00 *net;* postage, 14 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post-office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

In addition to the text itself are twenty-one full-page half-tone portrait illustrations of prominent Unitarian leaders, including a frontispiece of Channing. These grouped pictures add not a little to the general interest of the volume.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 10]

UNITARIANISM:

WHAT DID IT SET OUT TO DO?

WHAT HAS IT ACCOMPLISHED?

WHAT IS ITS FUTURE?

BY

REV. E. A. HORTON.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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UNITARIANISM.

"Go Forward." — *Exodus*, xiv. 15.

There are special reasons why I treat this topic. (1) We are told that Unitarianism is dying; that in Boston, particularly, it is losing ground. This was answered recently by James Freeman Clarke, in 1870 by Dr. Bellows, in 1860 by Dr. Putnam, in 1850 by Dr. Gannett, in 1840 by Dr. Channing. It is an old, familiar cry, echoed by the thoughtless for fifty years. But at every juncture, and for every new generation, it requires attention. (2) Our young people are not so thoroughly versed in the history, facts, and genius of our faith as to see the truth and judge correctly amid these alarms. They are easily misled as to the real condition of things. They demand information. (3) There is a recurring restlessness in our body which resents the old familiar statement that Unitarianism has acted as an influence, as leaven. It is called a tame and inadequate conclusion. It is claimed that we must discard it, and that our progress depends on adopting a new standpoint of organization and denominational growth. I agree that we ought to organize more, solidify more, unite more; but I shall make my statements a defence of the familiar figure, and point out the dangers of repudiating our old methods.

Let me ask and try to answer these questions, — What did Unitarianism set out to do? What has it accomplished? What is its future?

First, then, *What did Unitarianism in New England set out to do?* It is only after a lapse of time that you can measure and explain a movement, even as to what seemed at first the clear motives and plan of the originators. There is a Providential and unconscious element in the beginnings of great causes not fully seen by the participants. The Unitarian movement had, in its inception, the appearance of a protest, a revolt against Calvinism. It argued the unity of God against the Trinity, the spirit of the Bible against the letter, love against fear. The controversies and divisions seemed to be purely theological. But that was only secondary. The doctrinal battle was but a part of the unrolling campaign. We see now that there were, in 1815 and 1820, a large number of Christians in the churches of New England who found their lives unfed by the prevalent teaching and spirit. Certain doctrines then heard every Sunday were hostile to their reason, to their instincts, to the surrounding civil institutions. The spirit of religion was not encouraging to that large, loving, fraternal life, which, as disciples of Christ, they had a desire to realize. You must remember that the most of what we call modern theory and thought had not appeared at that time. These first Unitarians did not love theological discussions in and for themselves. Nor has it ever been the desire of Unitarianism to dwell in the region of controversy. In this we are constantly misreported. All our teaching and preaching of belief has been to provide space for growth, incentives to action; freedom, not simply to think, but to think for humanity's welfare; not solely to have truth, but to use it for the glory of God and the good of man. Whether right or wrong, the fathers believed that they could not get life, and that more abundantly, from a system of doctrine constructed after the pattern of Calvinism; so they rose and attempted to "go forward" by a better way. We have never had a platform, or a formulated policy, or a

denominational creed. From the start, down to our day, the union has been one of independent societies facing the same way, and working under the guidance of these three principles: 1. The love of truth. 2. Enthusiasm for humanity. 3. The spirit of Christ. These essentials were not distinctly seen at first, but no one can deny now that they were the roots and deciding sources of the movement. Unitarianism did not set out, primarily, to create a Church. It had one, — the congregational polity, — and it kept possession of a majority of the meeting-houses in this vicinity at the time of the exciting divisions. Historically, we are the Liberal branch of the old Congregational body which founded the colonies. Spiritually, we go back to the Apostolic days when churches were formed among the early disciples, with freedom and independence, and simple tests of membership. Unitarianism did not set out to produce an elaborate and final theology; its efforts in this direction were to simplify, to return; to trace again the lost lineaments of Jesus; to affirm the Fatherhood and Brotherhood, — above all, to ring that text from shore to shore, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Its yearning was for unity of belief in the essentials of faith, and unity of action in the building of God's kingdom on earth.

It was a positive aim. One that took no delight in needless attack or ruthless demolition. In brief, Unitarianism was an advance in theology and in practical religion. It aimed to stand for reason in religion and the rights of the intellect; but it waged a stronger contest for good works, for philanthropy, for character as God's test, for a life based on the two great commandments of love to God and love to man. In the glowing language of Dr. Bellows, "it affirmed the brotherhood of men, of races, of humanity; it called men to repentance and newness of life by a grander unfolding of the divine gift of life, of the wonders and glories that surround us

in the natural world; it displayed the gracious opportunities of glorifying God in the love and service of our day and generation. It spoke for the poor, the wronged, the ignorant, and unfortunate. It sought to arouse the human soul to a sense of its latent capacity, to haunt it with thoughts of God, to make its immortality a thing felt and known by the thrill of its aspirations. *To* light *by* light; *to* God *by* godly ways; with Christ, in Christ's spirit; and righteousness earned, not borrowed, — earned by genuine service of God in the interest of humanity."

I do not find, in the history of our body, that any calm leader ever expected to sweep the land and to build up a great sect. Our watchwords and methods are against it. It was against all precedent to expect denominational splendor. Liberalism in religion never was and never will be a code of belief, or an ecclesiastical structure: it is a habit of soul, an atmosphere, a spirit. It rallies by broad unifying truths; it vitalizes literature and business; it makes religion an everyday concern; it tries to bring profession and practice into greater harmony; it touches secular affairs with uplifting sympathy, and makes a sanctuary in God's temples of nature and history. It is a wise judgment, a loving hope, and a tender charity, — "life and love," as Dr. Gannett was wont to say, "life and love," forever going forward unto perfection.

Let us turn to our second question: *What has Unitarianism accomplished?*

The answer depends upon our measure and test of success. If the founders of this faith aimed for a grand church, or an intricate theology, or a revolution and destruction of old things, or a mass of adherents, then little has been realized. But for this they never struggled. Accepting my preceding statement as true, what could Unitarianism hope to achieve? I answer, only

this: to influence contemporaneous thought, to permeate other churches with liberal tendencies, to stand for certain truths and a certain life so resolutely and so clearly as to leaven the lump of modern Christianity. Its first work was to benefit the souls of those within its own churches; its next larger one, to affect the outside and contiguous sects.

What I wish to emphasize just here is not the fact that we have actually served, in the providence of God, as leaven, but to have you see that, in the nature of things, Unitarianism could have no other aim and no other hope. We have simply followed the law of history, — we have been obedient to an overruling demand. The greatest movements in history went on by the law of leaven. Beneficent reforms are not organized into success; they have a preliminary struggle of minority, despised and buffeted existence. One book may start a revolution, but the leaven of liberty has previously worked. Some may mourn our lack of vast organization; I do not. As one Whittier effects more for the brotherhood of man than a score of parliaments can do to tyrannize, so there is more radiating power in one free rational Christian than in the reiterations of a hundred conformists, organized and drilled.

I will not ask any one to take my assertion unsupported in regard to the work of Unitarianism. The Rev. Heber Newton, an Episcopalian, shall be my witness. Hear him: —

"The true work of Unitarianism is not to be studied in its Year Book, or gauged by its statistical results. . . . Its mission is to be sought in the insistent push of the thought it has quickened, and the principles it has sown through the larger bodies of orthodox Christianity. . . . It has sought to educe from the traditional formulas fresh and living conceptions, new and higher forms of the substance of all beliefs. . . . Truly, it is a noble claim for any church that its mission is to call the

various sects on to that which they all concede to be the substance of their varying forms, and to reunite them in a religion of the spirit."

All this from one not of our faith coincides with the words of Dr. Putnam: "The strength of Unitarianism lies in the diffusive power of its principles, which altogether overpass and outrun its denominational lines, and spread everywhere like an atmosphere. Unitarianism considered as a lump is very small, but considered as a leaven it is vast and omnipresent. As an organism it is feeble; as an influence it is irresistible." He adds: "There are more Unitarians, a thousand to one, outside of the Unitarian organization than inside of it."

I find in this fact — that we are leaven and not the lump — nothing that should exalt or depress us. We are simply the humble agents of great principles, destined to be the heritage of many more in the twentieth century. In this function of pioneer and advance guard, in this position of the minority, there are tribulations manifold. We must needs cheer ourselves by keeping in mind the noble past, by quickening loyalty and patience through study of our Providential history.

I do not see why other churches should exhibit feeling if we claim this position and this work. They have other and more tangible trophies; we are virtually contributing to their progress and power. By our sacrifices they are fed. In our poverty is their richness. We cut a path; they walk in it. We inaugurate a philanthropy; they enjoy it. Does the army despise the sapper and miner? No; the thoughtful ones do not. Dean Stanley comes to America to say that Theodore Parker has contributed more to theological progress than any other religious thinker of our century. Channing's works enter into the sermons and lives of thousands of Trini-

tarian ministers round the world, and they acknowledge it in private letters or public speech.

But let us be more specific. Boston has been the head-source of Unitarianism. What has been accomplished here? Remember that a great city is always the historical source of mighty movements. Rome, Athens, Constantinople, Alexandria, Geneva,—enumerate them, the starry list of central power. It is not coincidence, but cause and effect that explain certain glorious facts in the history of this city. Here "liberty, humanity, and reason" have found scope more completely than elsewhere. Reforms began here destined to make our times illustrious. Unitarianism furnished Horace Mann, Dr. Howe, John Pierpont, Garrison, Dorothea Dix, Sumner. It turned its light on history through Bancroft, Prescott, and Motley; it sent forth poets like Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes. If I were to copy a list already existing of the leaders in philanthropy, science, art, poetry, reform, statesmanship, religion, and literature, in business and life, all acknowledging from their own lips the inspiration and guidance of our faith in their careers, I should offer you a directory of illustrious names.

What has Unitarianism accomplished? It has "expressed itself in the ideal thought of Channing, the consolations and hymns of Greenwood, the tender wisdom of Ephraim Peabody;" it has done the greater part, by money and instruction, in the maintenance of Harvard University; it founded the "Benevolent Fraternity of Churches,"—the most complete mission system in any city,—and maintains it to-day with enlarged vigor. Remember that far back in 1830, when controversies were raging, the Unitarian enthusiasm for humanity came out in Tuckerman and was supported by Ware and Gannett; they labored for the poor and the unchurched. Unitarian wealth has flowed into the church treasuries of all denominations. Hardly one good enterprise has failed

to elicit response from our laity, even to the detriment of our own financial welfare.

If there is an institution in this land as unsectarian, as broad, as vigorous, as profoundly a helper to the young as the "Boston Young Men's Christian Union," I know not where it is. In its religious services all denominations join; in its membership all churches are represented. There is the "Tuckerman Circle," honorable and efficient, disbursing annual bounties. Gaze around you and behold the asylums, homes, schools, and organizations of all kinds nourished by the men and women of our faith.

New England Unitarianism is only about seventy years old. What ought we to expect in all sobriety of a movement that has served simply to leaven life, literature, theology and institutions? It has directly or indirectly, assisted to produce a Smythe, a Munger, a Bushnell, a Beecher, a Swing; a Stanley, Maurice, Brooks, Farrar. And who, to-day, stands foremost in the English-speaking world as the representative of deep reconciling views in the realm of religious thought but James Martineau, — the source of some of New England's best preaching? In our land no names more revered exist than Andrew P. Peabody and Dr. Furness, James Freeman Clarke and Dr. Hedge. No hymns more sacred and dear to all Christian hearts than those of our lyrists. No better organizations for mutual good and wide blessing are known in our country than the "Lend a Hand" clubs and "Daughters of the King" circles created by Edward Everett Hale. They are most numerous among the Trinitarian churches and are counted by hundreds. But I will not detail more. Accepting my statement that the aim of Unitarianism was to act as influence, as light, as a spirit, and that this consisted of a personal life in and by the love of truth, enthusiasm for humanity, and the spirit of Christ, — we

find for these seventy years a glorious result, a result that surpasses expectation.

Do I imply that all religious progress is due to Unitarianism? A most preposterous claim that would be; untrue and absurd. Universalism has served the same Providential purpose of influencing the world. Individual leaders have arisen here and there, sporadically. The *Zeit Geist*, or spirit of the age, that mysterious power of God, has pervaded men's sensitive minds. I am, however, dealing solely with Unitarianism, and replying to definite questions. My treatment is limited. The achievements of our church and of its faith, ought to be studied and known for encouragement and for justice. Young people grow up amid advantages, little knowing who gave them the truth, freedom, charities, humanities, progress, they enjoy. It is with no sense but gratitude that I review the past; certainly I shrink from vulgar boasting. As inspirations, I would enumerate whatever glories shine there. To prove our right to stand with our fellow-Christians, I say these things. Much have they done which we have left undone. God seems to confine bodies of Christians to distinct duties. We cannot accomplish many results within the reach of other churches, but we can be true to our past and to our future.

And this brings me to my third and last question. *What is the future of Unitarianism?*

Some Unitarian ministers say: "We have no future; our work is done; the leavening is all accomplished." Dissipate that idea if it has lodged in your mind. The advanced men of other denominations assure us it is not so; they tell us we are needed more than ever. They are right. Go west or south and behold the darkness, the spiritual bondage, the mediæval conditions.

While churches exclude good men from membership because of intellectual differences; while future everlasting punishment is depicted for heathen and sinner;

while the doctrine of total depravity is held essential; while baptism is considered a saving ordinance; while preachers dare not admit the teachings of science and history; while redemption is made to consist in profession and form; while the pure loving gospel of righteousness in Jesus, the Master, is obscured, — there is abundant need for us. Others tell us that we have always been theologians; that no more doctrine is wanted; that people crave works, — Christ-works. I answer: That living Christ, that gospel of good works we have proclaimed and humbly tried to exemplify all these seventy years. That was the original aim. Alas! we have been delinquent and languid and imperfect, as all Christians are found to be when tested by their ideals. Our progress will never come by denying the intellect or suppressing belief; a true theology is the only adequate basis of a church or of a religious movement. If I follow Christ, I necessarily have my views of his authority and mission. If I minister to my fellow-man, ill do I my service unless I have some strong thought as to his nature and needs. As I approach pain, or death, or mystery, weak am I unless my soul carries the resources of faith and hope, springing out of strong convictions. For any one to charge upon us a career of theological abstraction from actual duty, is to contradict the facts of history. We have been accused over and over of emphasizing good works and morality and character and ethical merit too much. No! there is a future for Unitarianism, but it is not to be gained by severing high and inspiring beliefs from practical Christianity. A famous foreigner once asked a prominent American, "How long do you think your Republic will endure?" Our countryman replied, "So long as the ideas of the man who founded it continue dominant." The foreigner assented. Unitarianism will have a future if we earnestly continue our methods and adhere to our original aim. It is to be

won by "going forward." Going forward intelligently; by learning of the past through our mistakes and successes. We shall be losers every way if we turn back, or go aside, or stand still, or go over, or do anything but gird ourselves with new consecration to fulfil what we have begun. This is to be done in two ways, just as the past success has come, — (1) By noble, free, faithful thinking; (2) By devoted, loving, personal action.

Those young men of the laity in our ranks are in the right who demand, not a vague and bewildering rally to do good, but a more enthusiastic use of our belief, a pushing forward of our activities, the freer handling of our churches, a breaking down of exclusiveness, a banding of the young people for missionary enterprises, an order to march all along the line.

We do not antagonize our fellow-Christians in their good works; we join them, led on by the worship and faith and influence of our own views. Take them away, and you break important mainsprings. The only way is to make our religion more vital, to display more loyalty, a greater missionary zeal, to live and act as those who have enthusiasm and consecration.

As a fact, this zeal is rising. For ten years there has been growth and awakening. The deeper the teaching and belief have sunken, the more ardent has been the denominational work. The proofs of this are in the aroused Sunday-school interest, shown in the wonderful meetings of the Sunday-School Union; in the Women's Auxiliary, constantly spreading; in the founding of the South End Industrial School, destined to leaven sections of Boston; in the planting of strong preachers in college towns, moulding the students; in the creation of the Boston Unitarian Club, and its erection of our headquarters; in the organizing of similar clubs at various places; in the wide work of the Post-Office Mission, with hundreds

of correspondents all over the country seeking light and aid; in the rise of new societies throughout New England; in the gift from a Methodist of Morgan Chapel to Unitarian care and guidance; in the better adjustment and prosecution of our education of the Indians and Negroes; in the establishment and success of a National Conference; in the network of local conferences all over the land; in the new Temperance Society; in the popular theatre meetings, planned to reach the churchless; in the young people's meetings, so successful for several seasons; in the creation of a Building-Loan Fund for young churches; in the fact, so cheering yet so dismaying, that the demand for Unitarian preaching far outruns the supply (what we need most imperatively is a filling of the Divinity Schools with students); in the ardor and consecration of our young ministers. All this is a part of our present condition created within ten or fifteen years, and it points to greater things.

Our dangers are many; some of them I fear, others I do not. I fear the self-satisfaction of the average Unitarian, his complacent ease in Zion. He sitteth in the seat of the scornful, and looks down on other churches. I fear the thoughtless Unitarian, who is easily carried about by every wind of taste or social current, devoid of convictions or zeal. I fear the idle Unitarian, who is willing that others should do all the work if only the choir will sing well and the preacher deliver pleasing sermons. I fear the gazing Unitarian, who looks over the churches and is all the time distressed because other denominations are so full and have numerical power, forgetting that quantity is not everything; he is full of panics and forebodings. The influence of such on the future I fear. But I am not afraid of the earnest though doubting Unitarian; he will come into faith. I shrink not from the possibility of seeing our movement blend

in new-orthodoxy, or some advanced and comprehensive form of religion. It will not come for a long time; and if it does, all glory be to God and his truth that we were permitted to have our part. I am not troubled by the prevalent statements as to the decadence of Unitarianism in Boston because a church or two is affected by changes of population. Other denominations have suffered more than we in this way, as you may see by reading the history of our city. The fact remains, that there are more Unitarians gathered in churches this day, of Boston and vicinity, than at any time these past twenty-five years. A brother minister of the Trinitarian faith has publicly said that it is proof enough to him of the decline of Liberalism that his church is full and prosperous, while Theodore Parker's church is extinct. Such condensed argument will hardly do. Certain causes operated to dismember the Twenty-eighth Congregational Church; but Parker's soul goes marching on, and his people are everywhere. We cannot put a bushel of spiritual power into a peck measure of organization.

I do not fear anything but those elements within our body that conduce to lethargy. We shall always abide on the Christian basis; I fear not the efforts of a few to remove our rootage to a different soil. Let us "go forward." We have not improved our opportunities; we are needlessly dubious; there is yet chance to do more and better work. "The one great opportunity of American Unitarianism is to make itself the foremost representative of that spiritual religion which is yet to be the religion of thoughtful, earnest, aspiring souls." It will offer a theistic science to thinkers, a rational theology to believers, a consecrating spirit to worshippers, a reasonable service to workers. The love of truth, enthusiasm for humanity, the spirit of Christ, — these shall lead us on. Unitarianism is not for the few in its final application and blessing, but for the many. It is for the

world. Let us love it, live it, and teach it. Be ours the noble effort so to carry on our cause that we may be fraternal in our fellowship with other churches, zealous of good works, guardians of religious freedom, a true branch of the Church of Christ.

[No. 11]

WHAT DO UNITARIANS BELIEVE?

A Statement

BY

REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND, M.A.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

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WHAT DO UNITARIANS BELIEVE?

For the purpose of rendering, if I may, some little assistance to the large number of persons all about us, who are asking the above question, as well as with the hope, possibly, of stirring up others still who have not yet done so, to inquire, I have prepared the following brief summary of information regarding the principles and positions of Unitarians

FREEDOM OF INQUIRY IN RELIGION.—We believe that the same God who is the author of religion, is also the author of reason; that there is no other way in which truth can possibly be separated from error in religion except by investigation and the use of reason, and therefore, that it is of the highest importance that there should be everywhere the freest and fullest inquiry with reference to religious things,—in this inquiry every man being permitted to stand upon his own feet, and to judge for himself, subject to no dictation or pressure from councils, synods, conferences, presbyteries, creeds, catechisms, fathers of the church, doctors of the church, or preachers.

NO CREED —We have no creed, that is, no authoritative statement of beliefs which persons are required to subscribe to; first, because we believe to the fullest extent in liberty of thought, and would do nothing to check it; secondly, because, in the very nature of the case, it is impossible for any two per-

sons to see truth exactly alike, and therefore a creed made by one man for another must be more or less inadequate if not false; thirdly, because if we had a creed fitted to our wants to-day, we should either have to stop growing in knowledge and insight or else get a new one to-morrow; fourthly, because neither Jesus nor the Apostles taught any, nor did the early church possess any; fifthly, because history gives unmistakable proof that creeds and authoritative statements of doctrine have always tended to tear the Christian church to pieces, to multiply sects, to suggest and foster persecutions, and to hinder progress.

SOMETHING BETTER.—But while we have no creed or fixed statement of doctrine which we prescribe as a condition of Christian fellowship, we *do* have a *great, central principle*, and a *few great, simple, central faiths.* Our central principle is this: the necessary harmony of true religion with reason, or the supreme authority of reason and moral consciousness in the search after religious truth. From this fundamental principle, everywhere held to among us, has resulted an essential agreement as to the general, fundamental faiths upon which our movement builds—an agreement probably quite as great as can be found in churches which have authoritative creeds.

GOD.—We believe God to be one, not three or more; an intelligent First Cause, not an ultimate blind force; beyond our utmost thought powerful, wise, holy, just, good, not malignant, or indifferent,

or in any way imperfect; the embodiment of all, and more than all, that we can possibly mean by that name which Jesus taught us to call him, "our Father," and hence one who can never cease to love and care for all his children, in this world or any other.

INSPIRATION.—We believe that inspiration is not something which can be locked up in writing, or confined to any age or people; but that now, to-day, and here with us, just as truly as 2,000 or 3,000 year ago and in Palestine, the Infinite Spirit of Wisdom, Truth, Beauty and Love, waits to come with its inspiration into every receptive mind.

REVELATION.—We believe that revelation is progressive, not stationary; that it is of all times, countries and races, not of the remote past or of a single people only; that it comes through many channels, including nature, history and the mind of man, not through any single channel alone, or in any miraculous way; that, so far from revelation being confined to one book, all moral and spiritual truth known to man belongs to it; that as a race we are now standing only in the morning dawn of revelation, not in its evening twilight.

THE BIBLE.—We believe that the Bible is the greatest, the most influential, the most important, the noblest depository of this revelation that has come down to us from the past, and is therefore to be prized by us as the most precious and sacred of books; though not as the only sacred book of the world, nor by any means an infallible book.

JESUS.—Accepting the Bible teaching that all

en are "sons of God," we yet believe that Jesus, y reason of the exceptional purity and perfectness f his character, was pre-eminently what the New estament in a number of places calls him, *the* son f God. We believe him to have been divine, but ot Deity,—as we believe that humanity, in the deree of its perfection is everywhere divine. We each tender love and earnest reverence toward him, ut we do not worship him, because, among other easons, he himself, both by word and example, aught us to worship only God—his Father and ours.

COMING TO JESUS.—While we believe that no vords in our day are more often used among certain arge classes of religious people, in a sense which as in it *no sense*, but is mere sentimentalism and ant, we at the same time most sincerely believe in real coming to Jesus;—that is, a coming (through tudy and reflection and effort) to a constantly more nd more perfect imitation of, or conformity to, his ure and exalted spirit and life.

BELIEVING IN JESUS.—Believing in Jesus we o not understand to consist in believing any specuative theological doctrines *about* him,—as his inarnation, his deity, his atonement, his relation to trinity. True believing in Jesus we understand o consist in believing in *him*,—in what he was and id, in the kind of life he lived and character he exibited ; in such love to God and man, such devotion o truth and duty, such beautiful self-sacrifice, such patience and gentleness, such bravery and fidelity as he everywhere taught and exemplified.

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FOLLOWING CHRIST.—We believe that the truest following of Christ is to go about doing good.

CONVERSION.—The word "convert" means "to turn," or "to turn about." Inasmuch, therefore, as all men, being imperfect, are liable to commit errors, and fall to walking in ways that are not right, we believe that all men have need to be converted, not once but again and again.

THE NEW BIRTH.—We believe that to be born again, and to continue to be born again, into new and perpetually new, into finer and higher and forevermore finer and higher spiritual life, is what Jesus taught to be the law of our being, and the design of the Creator for all men.

SALVATION.—We believe in salvation by character, not salvation by purchase or transfer; and that Jesus saves men solely by helping them to become better, not by vicariously atoning for their sins.

The whole idea, in all its forms, that God, before he can or will pardon men's sins, must have some third party to make him willing, or some sort of "plan" or "scheme," whereby he becomes able to pardon, we utterly reject. We believe that God's paternity is real, and not a mere pretense of paternity, and therefore that the moment any human child of his manifests sincere penitence and seeks forgiveness of his sin, God freely and joyfully forgives—without any thought, ever, of requiring first the suffering of an innocent person in the place of the guilty. In our reading of the Parable of the Prodigal Son—that part of the teaching of Jesus in which

he illustrates most fully God's dealing with his erring children—we find the father represented as running to meet the penitent son "while he was yet a great way off"; and we do not find even a hint that the elder brother, who had not sinned, was required first to make an "atonement" for the younger, or to "intercede" for him, or to "satisfy justice," or to "propitiate" the father, or do anything in any way to promote the father's willingness or ability to forgive.

THE GUILT OF THE RACE FOR ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION.—We believe that nobody can be guilty for anybody's sin but his own.

GOOD AND EVIL.—We believe that the world is not fallen, but incomplete; and that, in the nature of things, evil is transient and good eternal.

HUMAN NATURE.—We believe that human nature is imperfect but not inherently bad; that it has been wisely appointed to man to rise by slow degrees and long and even painful effort out of low conditions into conditions ever higher and better, and not that we are the degenerate descendants of pure and perfect ancestors in some remote past. We believe that the race as a whole occupies a higher plane to-day than ever before, and that this progress of the past gives us ground for faith in a greatly increased progress in the future.

RETRIBUTION.—We believe that no wrong-doing will go unpunished, and no right-doing unrewarded; that all punishment for sin is natural, not arbitrary, reformatory in its aim, not vindictive, and

therefore cannot, in the nature of things, be ever lasting.

HEAVEN AND HELL.—The doctrine of an eternal hell we unqualifiedly reject, as the foulest imputation upon the character of God possible to be conceived, and as something which would render happiness in heaven itself impossible, since no beings whose hearts were not stone, could be happy anywhere knowing that half the human family, including many of their own loved ones, were in torments. Instead of such a dark and God-dishonoring doctrine, we believe that the future existence will be one ruled by Eternal Justice and Love, that he whom in this world we call "our Father," will be no less a Father to all his human children in the world to come, and that that world will be so planned as not only to bring eternal good to all who have done well here, but also to offer eternal hope to such as have done ill here.

FAITH AND WORKS.—We believe in faith:—faith in God, faith in man, faith in truth, faith in duty; and that all these faiths are "saving faiths." We believe in works:—that the more good works a man does, so that his motives be good, the better pleasing to heaven is his life; and that no salvation of any worth ever comes to any human being except through faithful and earnest work.

WORSHIP, LOVE AND SERVICE OF GOD.—We believe that man is as much made to worship as to think; but, that perfect worship of God includes reverence for everything high and pure in humanity;

ıat perfect love of God ıncludes love to all God's ıildren; that he best serves God who is most use-ıl, and who obeys best every law of his being—hysical, intellectual, moral, spiritual.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.—We believe that the rue basis of church membership and all Christian ellowship, is not an intellectual belief of formulated reeds or articles of faith, but a sincere desire to nite for a common purpose of Christian worship, ıoral culture and human helpfulness.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION.—We believe that cience and religion, having the same author, can ever, by any possibility be antagonistic; but that rue religion is scientific and true science is re-igious. We cheerfully acknowledge that science ıas already been of incalculable service to religion, n helping to rid it of many degrading and hurtful uperstitions and errors; and we bid all scientific nvestigators a most sincere god-speed in any and very investigation which can throw light upon any of the great religious questions of the time.

FELLOWSHIP OF RELIGIONS.—While we be-ieve that Christianity is the highest and best relig-on of the world, we believe also that the other great religions of mankind have in them much that s true and of God; and that God, instead of having arbitrarily chosen out one single people and made t the sole channel of his communication with the race, leaving the rest in midnight darkness, "has not left himself without witness" among any people, and that "in every nation he that feareth

God and worketh righteousness (according to the best light he has) is accepted with God."

THE ABOVE.—The above, while not a creed, or authoritative statement, or one binding upon any but the writer, is yet believed to be in essential harmony with what is commonly held and taught as fundamental among Unitarians; as it is also believed to be in essential harmony with reason, science, the best scholarship and thought of the age, and the teachings of Jesus.

Some Leading Points of Unitarian Belief, with Scripture References.

1. One God, and only one, the Father, a Spirit, the only proper object of worship; in contradistinction from a trinity, and worship of Jesus or of the Virgin Mary. Matt. vi. 9; Mark xii. 29; Jno. iv. 24; xvii. 3; xx. 17; Eph. iv. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 5.

2. Jesus not God the Son, but the son of God (his sonship consisting in moral god-likeness, many others besides him being called in Scripture "sons of God"); not Deity but divine (all humanity being the "offspring of God," and therefore, in the degree of its perfection, divine). Matt. xvi. 16; Acts ix. 20; Acts xvii. 29; 1 Jno. iii. 1, 2, Hosea i. 10; Matt. v. 9; Gen. i. 27; James iii. 9.

3. Human nature not inherently evil (or, as the creeds of at least two of our great Christian denominations say, "dead in sin, wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body, and therefore

und over to the wrath of God"), but, created "in e image of God," and even in its lowest estate conining much that is beautiful, noble and well-pleasg to God. Gen. i. 26, 27; Rom. ii. 14, 15; Mark x. 14, ; Luke vii. 1-9 and 36-48.

4. God's love universal and everlasting, extendg as much to the next world as to this; all punishent remedial and disciplinary; all men finally to e saved. Is. xlix. 15; Jer. xxxi. 3; Ps. cxxxvi, 1; att. xviii. 14; Col. i. 20; Heb. xii. 5-10; 1 Cor. xv. -28; Luke xv. 20-24.

5. The Bible the most important and sacred of ooks, but not to be accepted as infallible, because in ome of its parts opposed to the teachings of science, he best conscience and reason of our time and the eachings of Jesus. Matt. v. 33-44. Compare Matt. 44 with Ps. cix., with Deut. xix. 13-21, with Josh. xi. 23, and with 1 Sam. xv. 2-11. Joshua x. 12-13; Jonah 17, and ii, 10.

6. Conscience sacred; inquiry to be full and free. uke xii. 54-57; Rom. xiv. 1-5; 1 Cor. x. 15; 1 Thess. . 21.

7. Man's whole duty included in love to God and ove to man. Mark xii. 29-33; Rom. xiii. 8-10.

Representatives of American Unitarianism.

For the benefit of any who may not have had heir attention called to the great prominence that Unitarians are coming to have in the best Litera-

ture, Scholarship, Thought, Reform, Statesmanship and Religious Teaching of the times, a partial list is given below of eminent American Unitarians :

RELIGIOUS TEACHERS.

William E. Channing,
Theodore Parker,
Ezra Stiles Gannett,
George R. Noyes,
Orville Dewey,
Thomas Starr King,
Henry W. Bellows,
Ralph Waldo Emerson,
Frederick H. Hedge,
Andrew P. Peabody,
Thomas Hill,
Cyrus A. Bartol,
James Freeman Clarke,
William R. Alger,
Minot J. Savage,
Wm. H. Furness,
Brooke Herford,
Robert Collyer.

POETS.

Henry W. Longfellow,
William Cullen Bryant,
James Russell Lowell,
Oliver Wendell Holmes,
John G. Whittier (Unitarian Quaker),
Bayard Taylor,
John W. Chadwick,
Helen Hunt Jackson.

HISTORIANS.

George Bancroft,
John Lothrop Motley,
William H. Prescott,
Richard Hildreth,
Francis Parkman,
Jared Sparks.

LITERARY MEN.

Nathaniel Hawthorne,
Edwin P. Whipple,
James T. Field,
Henry D. Thoreau,
George Ripley,
Bret Harte,
David A. Wasson,
John Weiss,
Thomas W. Higginson,
Charles Sprague,
O. B. Frothingham,
Edward Everett Hale.

LITERARY WOMEN.

Lydia Maria Child,
Margaret Fuller,
Louisa May Alcott,
Julia Ward Howe,
Lucretia Mott (Unitarian Quaker),
Maria Mitchell,
Mary A. Livermore.

PHILANTHROPISTS, EDUCATORS AND SCIENTISTS.

Samuel G. Howe,
Abbott Lawrence,
Peter Cooper,
Dorothea Dix,
President C. W. Eliot (of Harvard University),
Chancellor Wm. G. Eliot
David Starr Jordan,

seph Tuckerman,
enry Berg,
orace Mann,
Prof. Ezra Abbot,
Nathaniel Bowditch,
Louis Agassiz,

STATESMEN AND PUBLIC MEN.

resident John Adams,
resident John Q. Adams,
resident Fillmore,
resident Jefferson,
enjamin Franklin,
hief Justice Marshall,
dward Everett,
arrison Gray Otis,
udge Joseph Story,
eo. William Curtis.
on. John D. Long,
Daniel Webster,
Josiah Quincy,
Charles Sumner,
John C. Calhoun,
Charles Francis Adams,
Gov. John A. Andrew,
U. S. Supreme Judges
Wayne and Miller,
Dorman B. Eaton.
Hon. Geo. F. Hoar,
Hon. Carroll D. Wright.

This list does not claim to be absolutely accurate. Yet it is very nearly so. It falls below rather than exceeds the truth. Indeed another longer list, of names nearly as eminent, could easily be made.

It would also be easy to make out a list nearly or quite as striking of eminent Unitarians of England and other European countries.

We have not included the names of eminent Universalists, though Universalists are Unitarians, as are Hicksite Friends, and most of that large religious body in this country known as "Christians." The Progressive Jews are also essentially with us, as well as an ever increasing number of the more liberal thinkers in all the orthodox denominations. The Broad Church party in the English Church, and in the American Episcopal Church, and the New Theology men in the Congregational body, are a long way on the road toward Unitarianism; while the religious teachings of such liberal independents as Rev. David Swing, Dr. H. W. Thomas and Henry

Ward Beecher are essentially ours except in name.

New England is the part of the United States where organized Unitarianism most prevails. The city of Boston has 29 Unitarian churches. Yet the real influence of Unitarianism is nowhere, not even in Boston, to be measured by the number of its churches. Unitarian views are spreading in every direction—among the educated and thinking classes, among the common people, into the orthodox bodies. Dean Stanley, shortly before he died, expressed the conviction that the Liberal Theology will be the prevailing theology of the twentieth or the twenty-first century.

The American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon street, Boston, is the leading organization of the denomination in this country. Any person desiring information, books or tracts on Unitarian subjects, can obtain the same by applying to that address.

Benjamin Franklin and Unitarianism.

Benjamin Franklin, one of the greatest and most judicial minds that America has produced, left behind him this creed, as the result of his life-long study and reflection:—"I believe in one God, the Creator of the Universe; that he governs it by his providence; that the most acceptable service we render to him is doing good to his other children; that the soul of man is immortal and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound religion. As to Jesus of Nazareth, I think

s system and his religion, as he left them to us, e best that the world ever saw, or is likely to see; t I apprehend they have received various corrupt- g changes; and, I have, with most of the present ssenters of England, some doubts of his Divinity."

This statement of belief, embracing the ripest onclusions of perhaps the greatest mind of the New Vorld, constitutes, as will be seen, a correct, con- ensed statement of the doctrines commonly held y Unitarians.

President Adams and Unitarianism.

Says Charles Francis Adams, writing of his randfather, John Adams:—"He devoted himself to very elaborate examination of the religions of all ges and nations, the result of which he committed o paper. The issue of it was the formation of his heological opinions very much in the mould adopted y the Unitarians of New England. Rejecting the rominent doctrines of Calvinism,—the Trinity, the tonement, and Election,—he was content to settle own upon the Sermon on the Mount as a perfect ode. In this faith he lived with uninterrupted erenity, and in it he died with perfect resignation."

The Sermon on the Mount, so rational, so uni- ersal in its application, our most complete state- nent of Jesus' teachings,—but containing, be it no- iced, no intimation of his Deity, the Trinity, he Fall of the Race in Adam, the Atonement, the nfallibility of the Bible, (except to deny it—see Matt. v. 33–44), Election, or any other of the dis-

tinctive, leading doctrines of "Orthodoxy"—this sublime and wonderful Sermon of Jesus, has never been by any people so persistently set forth and urged as a sufficient religious code, as it has been by Unitarians during their entire history.

Abraham Lincoln and Unitarianism.

Says the author of "Six Months at the White House," with reference to the religious creed of President Lincoln:—"The conversation turned upon religious subjects, and Mr. Lincoln made this impressive remark: 'I have never united myself to any church, because I have found difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long, complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their Articles of Belief and Confessions of Faith. When any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, the Savior's condensed statement of the substance of both Law and Gospel, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself," that church will I join with all my heart and with all my soul.'"

Had President Lincoln only known it, there is one Christian church which does "inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership," exactly this sublime injunction of Jesus.

Longer tracts on many subjects may be had free by addressing the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

[No. 12]

THE EDUCATION OF OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

BY

CHARLES W. ELIOT, LL.D.
President of Harvard University

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

THE EDUCATION OF OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.*

BY CHARLES W. ELIOT, LL.D., PRESIDENT OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

It is always discouraging to attempt to talk about education, because everything has already been said. Plato thousands of years ago made a statement of the theory of education which has never been improved upon; and all down the centuries we come upon theoretical statements of the philosophy of education which remain good to this day, and which describe wise processes and methods of education, which have never yet been realized in the world. Nobody can outdo Milton's description of the education of a gentleman. Montaigne in France gives a perfect description of the wise discipline for children; and that at a time when the discipline of children in school and home was often rude and even brutal. You cannot improve much on Locke's theory of education. Shakespeare put the whole gist of the elective principle in education into two lines: —

> "Small profit comes where is no pleasure taken.
> Study, sir, what you most affect."

In short, it is characteristic of the subject of education that the theory of it has been over and over again ex-

* An address to the Ministers' Institute [Unitarian] at Worcester, Mass.

pounded almost to perfection, and yet practice lags far, far behind the theoretical statement; and the men and women who have done most in our day to improve education are those who have succeeded in putting into practice small portions of the ample theory of education which has long been at the disposition of the educated generations. It is the getting the right principles into practice which remains still in great part to be done.

But, then, there is another difficulty in regard to education which seems always to be postponing the day when the theory of the ancient philosophers or of the mediæval philosophers can be carried out. One trouble in education is this,— that the life for which we would educate youth is constantly changing. The life for which we would educate our youth to-day is a very different life from that for which my generation had to be prepared. The life into which the generation of Harvard youth to-day is going out is a life wonderfully different from that into which the Harvard youth of thirty years ago went out. Now, if the life for which we train children differs from that which went before, the methods of the training, or the subjects, or both, must differ. Plato illustrates this difference to perfection. He described the admirable education of a Greek free citizen when nineteen-twentieths of Greek society were slaves; and he distinctly says that as to the mass of mankind, as to the laboring classes, they need no education whatever. Therefore, however perfect Plato's theories, to-day's practice must have in mind a very different subsequent life of the trained youth in the society of to-day.

But I want to come at once to a part of the subject of education which has specific application to the religious body represented here,— the Unitarians. The mere ex-

istence of a body of Unitarian people is a striking phenomenon in the world. It never could have existed in peace and safety until this century. There are only seventy-five thousand of us to-day in the United States; but the fact that those seventy-five thousand people,— mostly educated people, mostly skilled people, mostly persons of intelligence, holding useful positions in the world, — the very fact that those seventy-five thousand people exist, and work, and think, and are free in our community, shows that the community for which we prepare our children is something unspeakably different from any community that ever existed before. So I think that Unitarians ought to take thought for the education of their children as Unitarians. We are a very peculiar set of people. We represent principles of thought which did not get expression in the world until our theological ancestors and preceptors had their being in the early part of this century. Now it is well known that Unitarians as a class take an unusual interest in problems of education. It has always been so in this country. It is just the same in England. It is just the same in Hungary. They have very good reason for so doing. They won their liberty of thought through education. They hope that their children are to enjoy further liberty of thought through better education. The Unitarians are as a body singularly influential in the community,— in whatever community they exist. They owe this strong influence to the very doctrines they have imbibed. They owe it to the independence of thought which led them to accept and hold these free doctrines. They owe it to the constitution of their minds, which inevitably inclined them to be or to become Unitarians. How is this power to be transmitted? How is this power,

due to the very nature of our theological opinions and to their intellectual consequences, to be transmitted generation after generation?

I shall have to begin, I think, with the little children. Education seems to be more important, and to give more striking results in its later stages than in its earlier; but I imagine that, if we could clearly see the educative effect of the mother, the father, and the brothers and sisters, in its relation to the childish mind, to the scope of that mind, we should see that the educative process before ten years of age is really more important and more productive than in any other period of life. Now how can the mode of thought which we Unitarians value be cultivated in the little children? We intrust little children to Sunday-schools; but they are there for a brief half-hour out of the week, and the teacher is not always skilled, and has not always the personal influence on the child without which little can be done for children. Is there any universally applicable method through which we can insure in little children the unconscious reception of the leading ideas of the Unitarian faith? I believe there is, and I believe that this method should be used in all Unitarian families and all Unitarian churches. It is the method of committing poetry to memory. I heard Dr. Crothers quoting somebody last Sunday to the effect that religion is poetry; but somebody else amended that statement by saying that religion is poetry believed. The amendment is important. Can we put into the childish mind through poetry a religion it will believe? We may be perfectly certain that no child ever got any religion out of a catechism. It takes an adult with the tendency to metaphysics to get anything out of a catechism. Will not a child unconsciously get religion out of poetry, if it be well selected?

I have seen the experiment tried in a fair number of instances,—not enough instances for a general conclusion, but in a fair number of instances,—and I never knew it to fail. In order to give you an impression of the actual working of the method, I must enter into a few particulars. Take such a poem as Longfellow's "Village Blacksmith," a very simple poem of universal sentiments, and let the child at an appropriate age commit the whole of it to memory, so that it can recite it whenever asked for. Some of the most fundamental conceptions of religion, some of the most fundamental conceptions of the new science of sociology, will enter the child's mind with that poem. Of course, as in all poetry, a great deal of what we may call information, or suggested knowledge, is conveyed in even a single verse. Take the verse,

> "He hears his daughter's voice
> Singing in the village choir,
> And it makes his heart rejoice.
>
> "It sounds to him like her mother's voice
> Singing in Paradise!"

Now any child eight or ten years old will take that all in, and will learn from it that the blacksmith had a daughter who could sing, and she sang sweetly in the village choir; and the blacksmith had had a wife whom he loved tenderly and she was dead, and she sang when with him, and now she was singing in a happy next world, in Paradise; and the blacksmith liked to go to church because he heard his daughter who reminded him of her mother. All that is in that little verse; and it is a beautiful picture of some of the best parts of human experience.

Take another poem, very well known to us all, but

seldom used, it seems to me, for children,—Leigh Hunt's "Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase)." There is a poem that any child of ten years old will take in, and it presents a series of delightful pictures; and at the end comes a very compact statement of the whole Unitarian theory about character.

Another invaluable poem for religious education is Bryant's "Waterfowl." (These are all Unitarian poets, by the way.) The whole Unitarian view of the Providence of God is presented to the child in that lovely poem,—God is guiding the bird through the pathless air, and just as he guides the bird he will guide me. It is the simplest possible presentation to a child's mind of the loving Fatherhood of God.

We may, of course, use hymns for these purposes; and abundant material exists in all our collections.

Conder's

> "Beyond, beyond the boundless sea,
> Above that dome of sky,
> Farther than thought itself can flee";

Addison's

> "The spacious firmament on high,
> With all the blue ethereal sky,"—

what pictures of the majesty of the heavens they present! How welcome, how natural, to the childish mind!

Edmund H. Sears, another Unitarian poet, wrote

> "Calm on the listening ear of night
> Come heaven's melodious strains,
> Where wild Judæa stretches far
> Her silver-mantled plains."

In that poem he presents in the most attractive possible way the myth of the angels singing at the birth of Jesus; and he presents it again in his other poem,

> "It came upon the midnight clear,
> That glorious song of old."

The Bible contains some passages the imagery of which should be impressed on the minds of all our children at a very early age. Two or three of the Psalms,— "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," "The heavens declare the glory of God,"— two or three sentences,— single verses of the Bible,— every child should learn by heart, and hold right through his life.

A few years ago I was asked by Brig.-Gen. Casey to prepare some inscriptions for eight tablets to stand over eight allegorical statues in the great reading-room of the Congressional Library. One of the statues represented Religion. He wanted inscriptions, seventy-two letters long, about religion and seven other great subjects. I sent him one of the best definitions of religion that has ever been written, and one of the most complete statements of the most attractive doctrine of modern sociology, —"So we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." I thought it was appropriate in a National Library,— "One from many." But Gen. Casey came down to his office one morning with my letter in his hand, and said to his second in command, Mr. Bernard Greene, now superintendent of the building (another Unitarian, by the way): "President Eliot has sent me eight inscriptions. I like them all but one. That one is about religion. It is too Christian. I don't feel well to-day. I wish you would write a letter to Dr. Eliot, and ask him to give me another inscription to go

over the statue of Religion." Gen. Casey went to his house, and in an hour he was dead. In a day or two Mr. Greene wrote me, asking if under these circumstances I would prepare or suggest another inscription. I fell back on Micah,— "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" And that is written over the statue of Religion. Those two sentences every child of our faith ought to learn and hold to. They will never get a better definition of religion than Micah's.

I must not tarry longer on this part of my theme. I believe in the conveying to the minds of little children through poetry all the fundamental doctrines of the Unitarian faith. I believe it can be done with pleasure to the child, with delight to the parents. I am sure of the last, for I have tried it.

Now what next, after childhood? We come now to the stage called "secondary education," which ought to cover from twelve to eighteen years of age or thereabouts. Boys of this age seem singularly impervious to the ordinary methods of religious instruction,— girls, perhaps, less so. I am not very sure about that, because I have had no daughters, and there are no girls in Harvard College; but I am told that girls are less impervious to religious instruction between twelve and eighteen than boys. At this age, however, the minds of youth are open to a good many things which are very precious to us, and which ought to be precious to us. They are open to all heroic thought. They are generally open to free thought, to any delineation of character or description of events impregnated with the idea of liberty. If any of us want to do anything in this world of a durable character, let us take pains to mix our doing always with some new atom

of freedom. Nothing else stands in this world, in religion or education or politics. The durable thing in this world is that which is associated with the growth of human liberty. All our Unitarian prophets have been teachers of liberty. The greatest of them all, Channing, gave the greater part of his life to the teaching of liberty of thought. Freedom to think, freedom to act, freedom for the individual, freedom for society, freedom for the slave, one of the most elementary forms of the preaching of liberty,— all our Unitarian teachers and poets have made much of this side of their teaching; and, in doing so, they have fastened to something which is eternal. Now the mind of youth between twelve and eighteen will grasp and hold all such ideas. Therefore use this mode of interesting them and instructing them in what is, after all, a fundamental conception of our faith. Instruct them in the doctrine of liberty, and illustrate it by the best human examples in all fields.

When we come to the details of a course of instruction, of a programme of studies, there is room for great difference of opinion, for prolonged discussion. The faculty of Harvard College was three years debating the advisable requirements for admission to Harvard College from now on through the next generation. It took three years to come to a conclusion. When they reached their conclusion, nineteen twenty-sixths of the requirements, so called, were in subjects prescribed; and there remained seven twenty-sixths only for choice. Therefore we are in no danger at present in our country of not finding in the classifications of secondary education enough prescription, something uniformly required of each highly educated youth, girl or boy. I ought to add, perhaps, that Harvard College is not more conservative than other Ameri-

can institutions. But the programme of studies is not so important an element in school work as many of us imagine. It does not make so much difference what a girl or boy studies, as how he studies and with whom he studies. For myself, I think the safest way in the education of a single individual child is to find out, if you can, what that individual child likes most in the way of intellectual exertion and does best, and then see to it that that child gets instruction in that thing if he gets nothing else. Make sure of that. It is astonishing how little we really need to know of what are called essential subjects. How little we really need to know of arithmetic, for instance, — next to nothing,— only the power of adding and subtracting and multiplying small numbers,— certainly nothing above ten in the head. I observe in the ordinary grammar school programmes of this country that it is not considered necessary for a child of fourteen to have studied any geometry at all, the subject of geometry being reserved for high schools. That is one of the most extraordinary exclusions that the world sees at present, geometry having been almost from the time of its invention, thousands of years ago, an element of great value in intellectual training. Still our children get along excellently well until they are some fourteen years of age without any geometry.

As to languages, there surely is no necessity of our children's knowing any language but English or any literature but English; because through English we may get all that is most valuable in every other literature. Therefore, it is a safe doctrine throughout secondary education to require only the barest elements of subjects which we are perfectly certain have some practical applications, and to guide the training of every mind on those subjects

which the child most affects, as Shakespeare says. There is not a subject in all the range of human knowledge that will not develop to a high degree every mental faculty in a mind which loves it. And, after all, the object in secondary education is always — not primarily only, but primarily, secondarily, and always — to win power, to win the capacity to use one's mind with clearness, accuracy, precision, grasp, and productiveness. That is the object of education.

Now, passing beyond the secondary school, we come to the university or college or the technical school. There the same principles apply, only the gates are thrown wide open, and full choice appears — the choice a boy makes when he decides on a profession, for example, and goes to the School of Technology; the choice which a youth in college makes when he says, I will devote myself to history and government and economics, because I am going to be a lawyer or a politician. At that stage of education the full principle of liberty is brought into play. Never be afraid of that. It is academic freedom. It is the way to power. All the great men of past times who have conferred unmeasured benefits on the world through their own intellectual triumphs have shown their intellectual capacities long before they were twenty years old. In fact, if a boy or youth does not show remarkable capacity in this subject or that before he is twenty years old, the chances are a thousand to one he never will.

But how about character? Character is the object of education. Character is the object of the Unitarian religion. I have seen for thirty years a steady stream of youth coming to the university, eighteen or nineteen years of age. In almost every instance the character of the youth is determined before he goes to college. He has

determined the way he faces before he goes to college. That is the all-important thing in this world: Which way do you face — up hill or down? We all of us slip and fall; but we can all of us face the right way, pick ourselves up and try again, if we fall. But it does not do to face down hill. You fall further, and it is harder to get up. Now that facing is almost invariably determined in a boy before he is eighteen years old. Hence the importance of founding schools where Unitarian children can be taught to face the Unitarian way. There is a wonderful difference in the effect on a boy's mind — and I think it must be the same with a girl's mind — between the influence of the Unitarian ideas of God, Jesus, religion, and human society, and the old-fashioned Evangelical ideas on those tremendous themes. We Unitarians have been neglectful of that tremendous difference, and we have sent our children to schools where there was no religious influence or to schools where there was a religious influence utterly opposed to our own views of God and Jesus and religion and human society. I have known Unitarian parents to do that from the most trivial motives,— because some nice boys or nice girls were going to that school; because there was a head of the school whose manners were good, and who could teach the boys the conventions of society; because in a given school there were none but sons of very well-to-do people. I say these motives are trivial, yet they have often been the motives for selecting this school or that by Unitarian parents.

This neglect is analogous to another neglect which we Unitarians have too long been guilty of,— the neglect to take pains to propagate the faith that is in us. I had occasion, in addressing a Unitarian Club in Chicago not long ago, to tell a story of a most excellent man, promi-

nent in all good works in Boston, who, when asked to subscribe to a new fund for our Divinity School, said he would not give a cent to make a man a Unitarian who could help being a Unitarian. We have had a precious doctrine committed to our care. We have had the privilege of inheriting from our leaders in the faith a literature of utmost value. We have heard with our ears preaching that ought to have resounded through the country; and we have done how little to spread this preaching, these writings! We ought to cause to be pointed out to all our children the main features of the history of the Unitarian movement. We ought to bring to the knowledge of our children the lives of all the Unitarian saints and heroes. We ought to show and declare that the acceptance of the doctrines of liberty is not inconsistent with the deepest and sincerest piety. Many people think of Unitarians as iconoclasts, destroyers of the faith and beauty of the world, as people who would annihilate reverence and respect and devoutness. Now that, to our thinking, is the precise opposite of the truth. The truth is that a perfect freedom of thought is not only consistent with the sincerest piety, but it is really the only atmosphere in which the holiest piety can grow. We ought to teach our children with utmost care the Unitarian conception of Jesus,—Jesus the mortal, the man, therefore the hero, therefore the exemplar. We ought to point out to them that there can be no real heroism in a being who knows beforehand the great results of his sacrifices or his sufferings. Foreknowledge excludes all heroism. Foreknowledge of result destroys the essence of sacrifice. There was no sacrifice if there was foreknowledge of the prodigious result. All heroism, all pathos, is taken out of the life of Jesus when he ceases to be for us

the human being. But do we teach our children that? Do we say that of Jesus in our churches and our homes? Not so clearly as we ought. We have often failed to present with perfect clearness our own conception of Jesus, our leader, our master, our guide.

I was to speak to you on education. I wanted especially to speak of the kind of education which Unitarian children ought to have. My conviction is that this is the kind of education that all children ought to have.

[No. 13]

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE IN RELIGION

BY

REV. BROOKE HERFORD, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE IN RELIGION.

BY REV. BROOKE HERFORD, D.D.

I HAVE always counted it one of the blessings of my life that I was brought up to business. I only had four years of it, as office-boy and clerk. I never went far enough in business to get to its emoluments, but I went far enough to get something of its drill and discipline. I was in it long enough to learn a great respect for business ways, and especially for business enterprise.

In one way this introduction to business life and ways has made me very sympathetic, but in another I am afraid it has made me very critical. It has given me an interest in all this busy city life, an appreciation of its sturdy activity, a sympathy for its difficulties, that I else could hardly have felt. But at the same time it makes me constantly dissatisfied with the unbusiness-like slackness with which much of our religious work is carried on. I cannot help comparing the way in which men carry on their business with the way in which the same people carry on their churches, the enterprise which they put into trade with the slack and feeble hold they take of religion.

There are many applications of this subject. For one thing it applies to the interest men take in religion itself, in its great convictions and thought, apart from their embodiment in religious institutions. I think I speak the feeling of all ministers, when I say that what we long for

most of all is to have the men among our people stand with us a little more definitely and heartily in this great interest of religion. We do not want fewer of the women, but we want more of the men! I do not mean that men are entirely indifferent on the subject. But still — to see the contrast! How many, who in all the doings of the world have so keen an appreciation of firmness and thoroughness, are in these higher elements of life so often hesitating and half-hearted! People who in business take care to see clearly what they are at, and who strike straight for the mark and make a clean stroke every time,— how often do you find them, not only in the most misty and undecided state about religion, but content to remain so, shrinking from taking any decided step on the Christian side, and, in fact, dealing with all that higher side of life with a feeble hesitation, which, if any man showed to them in business, they would cross him right out of their books.

We are all familiar with this as it shows itself in our orthodox friends. Here is your neighbor, for instance, a shrewd, practical man, who from Monday morning till Saturday night goes right to the point, and will not touch a business matter that he does not squarely believe in. But Sunday comes, and all this is changed. He goes to some church where the whole scheme of divine and eternal things is laid down as rigidly as if they had a township plat of them. Does he really take in all those old doctrines of total depravity and an angry God, a ruined world and a yawning hell? Does he believe the Bible to be absolutely divine all through,— Solomon's song and David's curses and all? Nothing of the kind. When you get into a quiet talk with him, he will frankly tell you that there is a great deal that he no more believes

than you do; and, in fact, you find that he thinks very much as you think. And yet suppose you press him to come right out, and stand squarely with you for these more reasonable beliefs, why, he draws in directly. "Ah, well," he says, "it is a difficult subject. There are some things that he does not see clearly. He does not know that he is quite prepared to commit himself." And you know very well that he never will be.

But it is not only our orthodox friends to whom this applies. While they are hesitating in avowing what they do not believe, what *we* want is a little clearer grasp of what we do believe, and a little more enterprise in working for it. With too many on the liberal side, liberalism is only a sort of vague impression; and, when it is only this, it is very apt to drift into a vague impression that everything is uncertain, and that there is not anything sure enough to believe in or work for very earnestly. But that is not so really. The main lines of religious truth are not doubtful. God, duty, immortality, and Christ as the greatest teacher of these great verities,— *these* are not really doubtful. These things have been questioned and investigated in the present day as never before, and they have stood the test; and those who watch the drift of the higher thought of science and philosophy know that these things stand to-day realities and certainties more than ever before. There wants a clearer hold of these things. With many there wants enough of thought and study of them to have a chance of getting a clear hold. We want a firmer, more open standing for them, a franker stepping forward in the line in which these things ask our worship and work. That is where we ministers feel the pinch. We have in our churches many of the strongest, truest-hearted business men of the community.

They are the men who, if they join a corporation, send its shares right up. They are the men who, if they take hold in an institution, mean to *make it go*, and do make it go. They are the men who, if they belong to a party, can quietly join hands with other strong men of the same sort, and put right through whatever they make up their minds about. They go quietly to them, and say, "See here: we must do this thing." And they do it. I believe we have a larger proportion of this sort of men in our churches than there are in almost any others. Why, if they would stand with us for religion as they do in business and public life and other things, there is nothing we could not do. But there is where the trouble comes in. Of these very same men, there are so few who will stand squarely with us on the religious side of our work, and take hold with us as if they really meant it!

I fancy some may be inclined to say that I ought not to be hard on such people, because, though they may hold back from standing openly with us on the religious side of our work, they are ready to stand with us and do their part for our churches and our church work as institutions. But I am afraid that plea will hardly bear looking into.

And why is this? Is it your fault? you ask; and perhaps you feel it a little hard to be reproached for a state of things which most men dislike as much as I do. But, then, would it ever have been so if you men had taken hold of the church like business men, who believe in the thing and mean to make it go? No! You pay your pew-tax, and then expect to have done with it; and, if the women ask you for more, you begin to say, "Come, this thing is getting too expensive." And so the women have first to devise the ways of doing such little Chris-

tian works as they can do, and then have to devise the means of paying for them. Do I blame them that our churches are what they are? Not I! My wonder is that the churches are still so good, for they are good. Take them with all their imperfections, the churches are still the noblest institutions in society to-day. They do represent Christ, partially at least. They represent him in his "going about doing good," they represent him in his drawing the little children to him, they represent him in many of the details of his ministry. But they want also to represent him in the great, strong purpose of his life,— the proclaiming of the true religion to mankind, and helping by it to change the world into the kingdom of God. Our churches might do this. They have all the vantage-ground for doing it. It is only manpower that they want. Already, in any dozen cities, our Unitarian churches include the body of strongest, stanchest men in all the city. But in what church do these strong men ever assemble together to consider squarely, How can we make our church do better the real work of a church of Christ in the world? It simply never seems to occur to them to look at it that way. They go on year after year much in the old way. They beautify the church, or get a new organ, or have a course of lectures, or anything that the minister likes to push. But if the church is pretty well filled, and paying its way, they do not see why he wants to fuss about anything more, and wish that he would be contented with having things go comfortably and well.

I have spoken of the need of more business enterprise in conducting our churches themselves. I want also to speak of it in relation to the larger work which our churches should be doing together. Take the American

Unitarian Association. I should especially like to do anything I can to strengthen the position of that Association with our churches. I have watched its course, I have seen its broad, practical policy, I have seen how wisely and carefully it has made every dollar do the work of three by careful management and encouraging local self-help; and now I have come to the conclusion that it is time our people and our churches took hold of it in quite a different way from anything they have done yet.

Think how the Association is supported at present. By a few churches, heartily and gladly, as the thing for which they most willingly do their part. But with how many is it so?

Why, you know pretty well the sort of thing that goes on after one of the Secretary's circulars has come to the average church. The minister feels his heart sink. We know he *ought* to press his people to respond; but he hates to speak about money to them, for they are always "talking poor," and he knows that they have been thinking that the church wearing-apparatus will hardly last the winter. However, he goes to his leading trustee,— a pushing, successful manufacturer, noted for making everything he touches succeed,— calls him Mr. Midas, and shows him the letter.

"Why," says Mr. Midas, "seems to me it's only about last month that we took up that collection."

The minister says: "No! It is almost a year."

"Well, anyhow," says the layman, "I don't see what those Boston folks want to be asking money of us away here. Haven't they money enough to do their own work, I'd like to know?"

The minister pleads that it is not a Boston work at all, that it is for all over the country; and he puts in a word

for all doing their part to help in this large missionary work.

"Oh, that's all very well," is the reply; "but I believe in charity beginning at home."

The poor minister is at his wits' end. He had thought last May, when he was at the anniversaries, that he could persuade his people to increase their contribution; and now all he can do is to say in a rather hesitating way: "Well, I guess we *must* do something. It won't do to let our membership of the Association lapse. Come, Mr. Midas," he adds, "it makes me feel cheap not to have our church help with the rest. So you take it up, and then the rest will be willing."

"Oh, yes, they'd be willing for me to pay it all myself, I dare say; but I can't do it. Why, I am building that new mill, and I've had to give ever so much to help build that Episcopal church, because the clergyman is my wife's cousin; and now they have just come on me for another two hundred toward election expenses. However, I suppose we must do it. Let me see, how much is it I give?"

The minister tells him "$20," to which he replies: "Well, I suppose I shall have to do it again. I guess that won't break me."

No! I guess it won't break him!

Now that is no exaggeration. That is just the kind of conversation that lies behind dozens of the contributions to the Association. There is hardly one of those smaller churches from which they come that has not among its members at least two or three each of whom could give the whole contribution, and hardly know it.

But why is it that these friends feel about it and talk about it in this way? Merely because they have never

taken it in that this is a great business enterprise, to be done like any other business and made a success of, and that it is *their* business, too!

I sometimes think that many Unitarians look upon all this effort to make our religious views better known and build up new churches as a sort of harmless *extra* which we ministers go in for, from a sort of restlessness. They don't care for it; but, as *we* do, they let us have our way so long as it doesn't amount to much. When they are good-humored and friendly about it, it is about in the spirit of the "navvy" who let his little wife beat him. "It pleases her," he said, "and it doesn't hurt me"; and a man gives his $10 or $20 with quite a pleasant air. But, when things are pressing, then he grumbles; and that is the reason that so many churches only send in just at the last, or many do not send at all.

That is the real trouble; and until this can be altered, until business men can see that this is their enterprise as well as ours, quite as much as ours, it is of little use appealing for more liberality. When they *do* feel that it is their business, then they will take it up and do it *as they do their other business*,— not just a little more liberally, but on quite a different scale.

This is not a factitious need, got up or exaggerated by the restlessness of a few ministerial enthusiasts. It is the real need of a new generation growing up throughout the country, upon whom the old thoughts of religion are more or less losing their hold, and many of whom are already feeling out for something better. What has God given us something better for? Just to keep it inside these comfortable old churches of ours, and have a good time with it? We face the need of a whole new world growing up from the ground,— the America that

is to be. Is it only the concern of a few restless sectarians what that new world is to be? It is the business of any man in America to do his part. I have been out through Kansas and Colorado, down into New Mexico. It was only ten years since I was there before, and everything is utterly changed. The new watering stations across that great desert, which then struck me with more awe than anything I ever saw in the world, are now thriving villages, many of them considerable towns. I walked about in Denver, Pueblo, Trinidad, the little straggling towns I knew,— so utterly overgrown that I literally could not, in any one of them, find a single place that I could recognize, and, finally, I came to a place in New Mexico where ten years since I called at a little log house standing miles away from any other; and now there are twenty-five hundred people there, and newspapers and banks, and the county round, which ten years ago was declared forever useless except for the scattered herd of cattle, is filling up with small farmers, who are finding that the land will grow oats five feet high and fruit as good as any in California. Over all that new world the Methodists are building about a new church every day in the year. Do I grudge it them? Not I. It is good, honest work they do, and as little sectarian as any work in the world. I preached in one of their churches, and got a cordial welcome; and I respect their work. But still it is not quite our work, and there is room for ours as well,— not room for it only, but need, urgent need for it; and I came home feeling like preaching a new crusade to find — what? The old story,— the American Unitarian Association, which should be able to take up the work, crippled for lack of funds, the Secretary asking whether our churches can possibly manage to

raise a third more, and the churches not quite sure whether the whole thing is not a nuisance.

Yes, of course it is a nuisance, if it is the enterprise of a few fussy ministers. But, if it is indeed part of the real business of our churches, part of the very business that they are here for, then it is something that should be done — that is what I keep pleading for — with the same enterprise which is put into your other business.

When you business men have got a "really good thing," you like to push it for all that it is worth. Now we have a good thing here. I know this simple, common-sense faith of ours is a good thing. I know it, not just because it is our thought, but because all the real thought of men to-day is, I don't say coming over to us, but tending toward the same great beliefs for which we have so long had to stand alone. It is not that the other churches are in any way doing our work, but that they are making us doubly sure that the lines on which we are working are true lines. They do not do our work. The world wants not only those who shall write in a little liberalism here and there between the lines of the old creeds, but those who shall take the stand for it, build churches for it,— not plead just for liberty to hold it, but proclaim it from the house-tops as the great bright truth of God. So the work waits for us just as much as ever it did; and it is the very work which our churches are here to do, and it is the layman's work just as much as the minister's. Ours to voice if you will, but yours to plan and organize, yours to carry in your hearts as one of the things you mean to make a success of, yours to support and carry forward with that practical energy and push which you know so well how to apply.

So I appeal to you to begin right away, and put the

Association on a new footing. Don't just go home to your minister, and say to him, "Isn't it time you were taking up that collection for the Association?" That would be something, indeed, for you to start him, instead of waiting for him to start you. But there is something better than that. Go home and get hold of four or five of the active leading business men like yourself, and say to them: "See: we have been doing this American Unitarian Association business in a pretty poor way. Suppose we take hold and lift it clear out of the old rut, and begin by doubling all round." Why, there is not one of them but would say "yes" to you in a minute. And then go ahead, and have a meeting about it after service some morning, and talk it up; and the next Sunday have a sermon about it, and put the thing through!

That is the practical matter which is waiting at this hour for a little more business enterprise. But do not stop with this one thing. It is for the whole of this great religious life and work which our churches might be doing in the world that I am speaking. Stand with us in all of it. Do what you can both for our faith and our church. And be sure of this,—that, holding to them in that strong, manly, earnest fashion, all that you can do for them will be nothing compared with what they will do for you.

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THIS is not a critical or philosophical account of Transcendentalism in New England, but a plain history which presents the subject with the smallest possible admixture of discussion, either in defence or opposition. The author has avoided the metaphysics of his theme, by presenting cardinal ideas in the simplest statement he could command, and omitting the details that would only cumber a narrative. The fundamental ideas of the philosophy, however, are here traced to their historical and speculative sources, and their tendencies defined. The author was once himself an ardent Transcendentalist, but if, as Renan says, "in order to judge a faith one must have confessed and abandoned it," he still retains enough of his old sympathy and admiration to do his subject justice.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
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[No. 14]

UNITARIANISM.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

By Rev. Frederick B. Mott.

Unitarianism means:

God.	The Universal Father, living, and loving.
Religion.	Obedience to the voice of God.
Christ.	The brightest example of God's holy spirit working in man.
Bible.	Record of a nation hearkening to the voice of God.
Humanity.	Upgrowing and immortal, though still incomplete.
Character.	Life purified by love.
Worship.	Personal contact with God.
Service.	To do good the supreme purpose of life.

WHAT DOES UNITARIANISM MEAN?

Unitarianism means: **God.**

The Universal Father, living, and loving. He guides us through the call of duty, reproves us through suffering and remorse, comforts us through the instinct of faith. These are the tones of His voice, — voice of the Universal Father, loving and ever watchful, caring for every child.

Unitarianism means: **Religion.**

Obedience to the voice of God, — to the whisperings of the holy spirit heard at first hand in the depths of our own hearts.

Unitarianism means: **Christ.**

Discipleship to Jesus Christ, as to the brightest manifestation of this holy spirit of God, working in man, showing life lived as God would have all life lived. As our religious Master, we gather together "In His Name."

Unitarianism means: **Bible.**

A real reverence for the Bible, as a storehouse of religious help, — the most complete record of a nation hearkening to the voice of God to be found in any literature. So to be profoundly studied and used.

Unitarianism means: **Humanity.**

A real reverence for human nature, as for an incomplete but upgrowing childhood. Born of God's love, humanity grows steadily year by year to better things, and is immortal because its life is the breath of God's own spirit.

Unitarianism means: **Character.**

Love ruling and controlling the motives of life, so as to conquer sin, and make the heart pure. This the only way of salvation.

Unitarianism means: **Worship.**

Much more than an act of devotion, a veritable spiritual greeting, a personal contact with God.

Unitarianism means: **Service.**

Lifting the burdens of the weak, cheering the sorrowing, giving rest to the weary. To do good the supreme purpose of life.

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[No. 15]

LIVING IN THE UPPER STORIES.

BY

REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

LIVING IN THE UPPER STORIES.

Friend, go up higher. — LUKE xiv. 10.

PEOPLE very commonly have rooms in their houses which they never occupy. As you drive through the country in winter, you see a light shining out, now here, now there. And very often, on the score of economy, of habit or taste, it is evident that the whole family lives in the kitchen, — all the rest of the house is dark. Here and there, one has gotten out of the kitchen into the sitting-room. And now and then they have made and have come to feel at home in a library.

These different stories, upper and lower, in his habitations may be taken roughly to represent the fact that man himself is a structure of stories, upper and lower. The kitchen is a necessary part of every home. No work in it has about it any necessary touch of degradation or disgrace. Indeed, unless its work be properly performed,

the higher functions of the home, that depend on the food supply by which they live and do their work, must inevitably suffer. No sitting-room or parlor or library can long fulfil its ideal, unless the kitchen be properly thought of and cared for. And yet the man who is content to have only a kitchen, and live in it all the time, is hardly up to the standard of our highest thought. So we have no word of fault to find with the lower stories of human nature, in themselves considered. He who despises or neglects them will suffer in the higher. But he who furnishes and lives in only the lower stories of his nature misses the best of his life, and never completely knows what it is to be a man.

To make our thought a little clearer, let us glance from the foundation upward over some of these stories of human life.

There are thousands of men in Boston, and all over the world, who lead a merely animal life. I need not picture such lives; you know what they are. Lust, drink, game, — these words sufficiently indicate it. They are persons who are said to "know life." They know the smallest fragment, and the worst side of it. They are called persons of "pleasure." They have such pleasure as swine know in the mire, or as asses find in eating thistles. They are devoted to the grosser appetites of the body.

A little above these are such persons as find the sole end of their existence in what is called "fashionable society." Now, you know I have no word to say against true society life or sensible fashions. But these people care for nothing else but balls, parties, theatres, and a round of amusements. They live for no purpose. They are butterflies, or millinery advertisements.

Then about on the same level is the purely selfish business man. He labors only to make money, or because the excitement has become so habitual that it is now a necessity of his existence. Against money, or money-making in any honest way, you know I have not one word of complaint. But simply getting it, for no high purpose, is not a very exalted aim in life. He who collects bric-à-brac, or even old junk, is doing as worthy work as he who collects money, if that is all.

A story above this is the affectional life. This is the region of family and friendship loves. The man who lives here is rarely gross, and he tastes some of the sweetest joys of life. He who, with health, has a true wife, a dutiful child, and a true friend, may laugh adversity to scorn and defy the world. But, taking all these with him, one may go higher yet. These may be possessed and enjoyed by one to whom knowledge is only a name and the world's alluring mystery a blank.

To be all a man may and ought, he should

climb up the stairway, and occupy and furnish the chambers of his brain. The word *man* means *to think*, and he who does not learn to think can hardly be called a man.

But the moral, the ranges of truth and right and duty, are higher even than mere intellect. Not that they can be separated, for all true and just morality must be based on a true knowledge of facts and human relationships; but character is nobler than knowing.

Above all, crowning the whole structure of humanity, is the crystal dome of spirit. Here is the observatory, open to all sides of the wide, round heaven, from which are visible the eternal stars of the divine firmament, which is the visible garment of the invisible God. Here he comes face to face with a Being to be adored. It is the realm of beauty, affection, aspiration. The dignity and grandeur of life are seen, hope finds her wings, and man inhabits eternity.

These hints may be taken to indicate the stories in the structure of human life. My purpose is only to suggest to you some reasons why you should habituate yourselves to living *upstairs*. You should listen to the voice that says to you, "*Friend, go up higher*," because —

I. This is the way to be happy.

We instinctively seek happiness, and it is a perfectly proper object of search. You may even

take it as a gauge of your manner of living. If you are not happy, something is wrong. The natural faculties used naturally will produce happiness, as surely as the wind playing across the strings of an Æolian harp will produce music. If not happy, then the strings are out of tune. Of course, this does not mean that you shall never be ill, never lose property or friend, never suffer. Real happiness is consistent with and superior to all these. Have you never seen the face of a sufferer gleam with joy? Even the martyr's eyes may glisten with a deep brightness that persecution cannot cloud any more than evening mists can blot out the stars.

You may seek happiness, then, only not at the cost of others or of any right and noble principle. And the *way* to find it is by climbing into the upper stories of life. Note, in the first place, that the higher the faculty, the higher the pleasure. Pleasure is only the satisfaction of natural desires. So, of course, the higher the hunger, the higher the satisfaction. The higher the rank and the more complicated the structure of a musical instrument, the higher and sweeter the music. They range all the way from the boy's willow whistle that he makes with his jack-knife in spring, through flute and harp, to piano and cathedral organ. The man who simply plays upon his lower, physical faculties, ranks only with the brute

who shares his pleasures with him. Only as he goes up higher, through love and knowledge and duty and truth, does he come to look on the face and enter into the blessedness of God. To do a good deed, to help some one, to discover a new truth as an astronomer discovers a new planet, — these are joys that neither the brute nor the brute-man ever tastes or can even understand. The "man of pleasure," as he is falsely called, does not know what pleasure means. As well call the boy with his whistle the musician, and forget Beethoven. It is only the gluttony and drunkenness of the basement; while sitting-room, parlor, library, and observatory rise above him, into which he has never entered. Life, in its true and broad sense, is to him an unknown land, up whose rivers he has never sailed, on whose slopes he has never walked, whose birds have never sung to him, and from whose mountain-tops he has never gazed.

And, then, the lower, the basement pleasures of life, being gross and selfish, bring surfeit and shame, and always leave a sting and sense of degradation behind, so that, when the mercantile balance is made out, the loss more than balances the gain.

Then these lower pleasures are brief and evanescent. No wise man will invest his wealth in clouds or morning dew, that evaporate and flit

away while you look at or as you try to grasp them. It is of the very nature of the higher things of life to abide. They last as long as life itself, and can be taken away only when the soul itself can be annihilated.

Thus he who sensibly seeks only pleasure will leave the swine in their sty and the cattle in their stalls, will leave the kitchen of only food and drink, will leave the dressing-room that knows only of garments and ribbons and adornments, and will climb up into the higher stories, where are gathered friends to love and books to read, and where are high and noble duties to perform, and from whose upper windows he can look out into the blue glory, and see the eternal stars of God's great heaven.

II. Once more, only as a person ascends can he gain any wide outlook, and so have any just estimate of the relations, proportions, and values of things.

A boy cannot understand a man; for he has never been up into the heights of manhood. But a man can understand a boy; for he has passed through it, and so includes boyhood in his present self. An ignorant man cannot understand an educated one; but the educated can understand the ignorant, for the ignorance he has passed through, leaving it behind and below him. One who has always lived in a little, narrow valley may come to think his door-yard the whole world.

But he who climbs the mountain does not lose the valley: he only sees its true size, importance, and relative value as compared with the great horizon. This, I think, is what Paul means when he says, "The natural — the fleshly, animal — man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him." "He that is spiritual discerneth all things." That is, the man who lives in the upper ranges of his nature comprehends all beneath him; but he who lives in the lower cannot possibly know the higher, — "they are foolishness unto him." To a fool the philosopher is a fool. So to the man who lives in the basement of his being all the higher stories are only dreams or folly; while he who has gone higher knows that only the contented dweller below is the fool, knowing nothing of what he slights and despises.

Now, this is no unpractical thing. It takes firm grip of your daily lives. You must live in the upper stories of life, in order to know what things are worth, and give each thing its relative importance. Let me tell you just what I mean. The wild Indian — Sioux or Cheyenne — struts about in his beads and colored rags; while you look on and laugh at his conceited ignorance and folly. His finery is worth nothing to you; but it is worth *to him* as much as the things you value are *to you.* And your finery is only foolish tinsel to one who

has learned to prize something better. Just this is what Agassiz meant. He could not "stop to make money," which to you perhaps is everything, any more than you would stop for the Indian's beads or feathers. The beads, feathers, and money are all well enough in their place; only you put a false estimate on them, if you have not learned to know that other things are of unspeakably greater worth. When in a valley, the valley is all there is of the world. Put a copper cent before your eye, and the cent is bigger than a mountain, and will even hide a star that is a million times greater than the whole earth. It can shut out the whole heaven.

If, then, the man never goes higher than his kitchen, the kitchen is everything to him. But he who knows and is at home in parlor, library, and observatory, is able to estimate correctly their relative values. He does not lose the kitchen: he only puts it in its proper place. He who lives in the basement owns only the basement; but he who lives in the upper stories owns the whole house.

And, then, the man who lives in the upper ranges of the universe is able to estimate his own sorrows and disappointments, and so is not overwhelmed by them. Perhaps there is as much danger of our being selfish in our sorrows and losses as in our pleasures and gains. Take one

who lives only for himself. When he loses, when he weeps, when his heart aches, he thinks none ever lost or wept and was pained like him. So he loses courage and trust, and thinks the whole universe is out of order. But let him "go up higher" where he can overlook the world, and he learns that loss and tears and pain are the common lot of man. And so, instead of selfishly nursing his own sorrow, he will be moved to go out and help some other lonely and wandering soul; and thus, as he enters into divine labor, he will enter on the divine rest. How often is it, in this wilderness of want and trouble, that you will see a man or woman simply sit down and brood over a disappointment, listening to their own complaint, until they have no ears left to hear the cries of the great world of humanity in its struggle and travail! Climb to the upper stories, then, and look out through your tears, and see what throngs there are whose burden is heavier than yours.

And then, unless you go up where you can look abroad over the world, you almost inevitably come to be a hobby-rider. Your business, your schemes, your pet projects and plans, your way of helping reform the world, come to be everything, and others nothing. So you get out of sympathy with the movements of the great world outside your own little sphere. You come to depreciate, because you misunderstand, the efforts

of others as honest as yourself. So you get soured and disappointed. You remember the prophet Elijah in the wilderness, under the juniper-tree. He thought he was all alone, and the universe going to wreck, because he was so absorbed in himself that he had not learned that God had any other true worshipper or mankind any other friend. If we set our whole heart on saving the world only through our little plans, then, when they miscarry, we lose faith in God and get out of sympathy with man.

Go up high enough where you can see. There are farmers who know nothing but oxen and crops, and doctors who know nothing but diseases, and lawyers who know nothing but briefs, and merchants who know only teas or silks, and ministers who know only theology. Go up where you can see. Then, if your own affairs do fail, you will know that the stars still shine and that God still lives.

III. And, once more, only he who lives in the upper stories can do much towards lifting up the world.

Man's life is worth little only as he so lives that he helps others. The names of those that mankind remembers with gratitude and love are the helpers. They who stand crowned on the summits of the past are the ones who have inspired and lifted mankind. If you are doing nothing for

others, you might sink on the surface of the stream of time, and beyond your own immediate circle there would not be a ripple. About all the good that large masses of people do is to help swell the census list. They add to the world's sum of values no more than one more fly adds to a June day. But if, in the smallest way, you are trying to help somebody, then you have become a co-worker with God, and are a part of the infinite worth of the universe.

But how help others? You help as you lift somebody higher. But no man ever heartily tries to help towards what he does not himself know or appreciate. You do not invite a friend to a hill-top for the view, unless you care for beauty and know it is there. So of painting or music, so of poetry or literature of any kind, so of goodness or benevolence, so of religion. Only as you know or appreciate these things do you care enough about them to help others towards their attainment.

And, then, your advice is worth nothing without your example. Suppose you praise the view from the top of Bunker Hill Monument, and advise everybody to go up, and see how fine it is. Some one asks you if you have ever been, and you say, No, and confess you do not intend to. How highly will people estimate your advice? This is the weak point in much family teaching.

Fathers advise their boys to be good; while the boy, if bright and shrewd, knows that the advice is carried about to be given away and not practised, because the father is not good himself. Of what avail is it? This is the weak side of churches. However unreasonable it may be to expect the minister to be better than other people, it is true that his words gain a tremendous power when his life shows that he regards the grand ideals he preaches as practical, and tries to live them out. One must be more than a guide-post, that points the way, but never goes. The advice of a deacon who cheats, or a new convert who lies, is apt to end in breath. So, when a man proves a theological doctrine by false witness and perverting evidence, he must not wonder at the growth of doubt. If you expect others to value a treasure, you must show that you value it yourself. So you cannot help others up out of their animality into the upper stories of heart and brain and spirit, unless you let them see your sincerity in your trying, at least, to climb yourself. Thus you cannot do the world much good, except as you live in the upper stories, and say, "*Come up* and see how sweet is the air, how wide and beautiful the prospect!"

How, now, can you climb? Where are the stairways?

First, *think!* Look about you. Do not get

buried in the present only, and the things that immediately press upon your attention. Think! The world is large. Heaven and earth contain many things. Your little affairs are only a very small part. Try to realize this, and go out of yourself to discover the things as yet unseen.

And then *do!* How does a man ever learn anything beyond him? Simply by *doing* it. How did you learn arithmetic? By *doing* the problems. How does one learn to play the piano? By playing. How does a child learn to walk? By walking. How do you develop any faculty? By using it. So the heart, the brain, the moral life, the spiritual, can only be made and kept alive *by use.* Exercise yourselves in all the good and high things you wish to acquire, however feebly at first, and you will increase in strength. The convalescent at first can only walk a few steps to the window or on the sunny side of the street; but use gives vigor, till again, as of old, he ranges the valleys, climbs the hills, and stands exultant on mountain-tops, with the seas at his feet, his head above the clouds, and his eyes looking clear on the never-setting stars.

A WONDROUS structure is this house of life!
Story on story high
It lifts from out the street's dull noise and strife
Its dome against the sky.

Here in the basement filth and revelry:
It seems a cattle-pen,
Where passions struggle and brute creatures lie:
They do not look like men.

But climb this stairway, and above the noise
Here is pure love's sweet nest;
In cages by each window, birdlike joys
Sing their low songs of rest.

The mother sits with love-light in her eyes,
And all about her feet
The children play. Her baby lullabies
The picture make complete.

Another stairway up, and here is brought
The wide world's gathered lore:
These rooms have treasured all the age's thought
Of after and before.

Here is the joy of knowing, and the thrill
Of him who, first of men,
Sees some star-truth, new found, his vision fill, —
A truth not seen till then.

Another story higher, here behold
The realm of right and law;
Here stand the world's good heroes, who of old
To them men's hearts did draw.

And over this the dome, ablaze with light,
Through whose clear glass 't is given
To see God's higher glories day and night
Ring the whole round of heaven.

Now that we 've entered this great house of life,
Let us go higher, friends, —
Stairway on stairway o'er the filth and strife
Climb where God's heaven bends.

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[No. 16]

A

CHIVALROUS RELIGION.

TO OUR YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN.

BY

REV. CHARLES F. DOLE.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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A CHIVALROUS RELIGION.

To our Young Men and Women.

Mr. Hawthorne once wrote a little story called "The Celestial Railroad." The story described a new sort of "Pilgrim's Progress," in which the way to heaven was made to go by easy grades and in luxurious carriages. The famous Slough of Despond was bridged, the Valley of Humiliation was filled up, and a tunnel was put through the Hill Difficulty. The train allowed passengers a comfortable time to stop over in the City of Vanity Fair.

Religion is often put into such a form as to remind one of Mr. Hawthorne's story of "The Celestial Railroad." How easy a religion can we offer? In the first place, we have a religion extremely simple for the mind. It compels no one to recite any long creed. It has no burdensome catechism to commit to memory. It leaves every one's thought free.

It is a very generous religion in its rules of

conduct. It does not forbid pleasant amusements. It does not require its people to wear long faces. It bids them enjoy the good things of this world heartily.

It does not seem also to be a religion that taxes one's pocket severely. It imposes no tithes. It allows every one to give what he thinks right for charity. Neither does it seem to be harsh in its demands for the support of its churches. It does not call the staying away from church a sin. It makes of Sunday the most delightful of days. Thus modern religion comes to us with a very pleasant aspect.

Why is it that such a description of religion does not win our hearts? We do not really want an easy religion. We may not be able to join the Moravians or the Salvation Army. Nevertheless the heroic deeds of the Moravian missionaries and the evident self-sacrifice of the Salvation lassies working in the slums of our great cities move our admiration. The fact is, we want a chivalrous religion, or we have little respect for religion at all.

The story of religion, at least in its great and living periods, has been a story of chivalrous heroism. We read the Hebrew prophets to-day because they risked everything for their faith in righteousness. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are dry reading, except for the fact that they tell

the deeds of men who made supreme sacrifice for the religion of the one God. The life of Jesus is nothing unless it appeals to the chivalry in us. Throughout eighteen Christian centuries the saints have been men and women who counted not their own life dear unto them. We are glad of the name of the "Mayflower," because the little vessel brought men to these shores who risked everything for the sake of their religion. By as much as we are children of the fathers, we cannot be content with any religion which simply bids us take our comfort and enjoy ourselves. Indeed, it is doubtful whether excellent music, painted windows, æsthetic surroundings, and cushioned pews in themselves ever had the least power in bringing to men the peace of God, the consolations of religion, or the enthusiasm for humanity.

All this becomes evident when we ask what we mean by chivalry. Chivalry is essentially that which goes on its way toward any noble service without the thought of personal reward. Chivalry never makes bargains. It never asks to be paid in advance or thanked. The chivalrous friend is never assured beforehand that his friendship will pay. The chivalrous patriot never knows in shedding his blood that his heroism will come back to him. In the spirit of chivalry there is a generous and infinite abandon of self. This does not mean that chivalry acts without reason or

blindly; but its reasons, good as they are, always stop short of demonstration. In the action of chivalry there is always present an element of faith and venture.

This spirit of chivalry is necessary to religion. A bargaining or mercenary religion is impossible. Religion grows out of knowledge; our modern religion especially has a splendid foundation in facts and reason. But religion begins with no complete demonstration; the deepest facts — the thought of God and the immortal life — do not offer themselves with guarantees to compel the mind. The fact is, religion would not have any heroism in it, would not appeal to the holy spirit of chivalry in us, would not be what the soul of man craves, if selfishness could be assured beforehand of its own ease, safety, and sufficient compensation. We are glad that this is so. The method is worthy of God; it is his noblest appeal to his children.

We think our liberal faith a very simple religion; reasonable, broad, generous, pleasant, and exactly suited to our present times. It is fine to discover also what distinct claims it makes on our chivalry. In the first place, the highest religion of to-day is as yet the religion of the few. The vast multitudes do not understand it. Its noblest thought is looked upon with suspicion as dangerous; especially if it takes the

name of *Unitarian*, many enlightened people are afraid of it. There are few places in the English-speaking world where its avowal is popular; the hearty and enthusiastic belief in it is everywhere exceedingly rare.

Moreover, the method of the new religious thought is extremely bold. Religion has mostly seemed to men to be buttressed by vast fortifications. Around its citadel lay a dangerous country. Enemies to religion lay concealed in the forests and behind the hills. Religion was thought to be a centre of attack, from the side of science and from reason alike. The soul of man that wanted to be safe must stay within the fortress. Now the new appeal of religion is to go outside the citadel, — to leave the earthworks and the moat in the rear, to search the forests, to face all lurking enemies, to stand in the open field; the call of religion is to confront all the facts of the world in the mighty trust that this is a universe, that no enemy to religion is anywhere to be discovered in it. This is distinctly a call to the chivalry in us. It seems at first to involve a risk of all that we have held most dear. It asks for volunteers who will search the forests and march among the hills. No one can be sure in advance where the climbing path of truth may lead. It threatens to go near to terrible precipices; it threatens to lose itself behind perpendicular rocks

of doubt. The appeal is to the brave mind, regardless of self, to march on and climb, with sublime trust that truth leads surely to the heart of God.

Religion asks a harder thing than even to trust in the truth; religion affirms that this is God's world. It demands, then, that its sons and daughters shall live lives that befit the divine world; they shall live in the spirit of the beatitudes; they shall treat men by the Golden Rule. Here is a splendid venture for their chivalry. They cannot be assured in advance that the divine laws of life will work. Will it pay to be just and always to speak the truth? Can they live as God's children ought to live and make money enough not to starve? Can they safely follow ideals in politics? Can the different nations afford to treat each other as brothers? Can any one begin to live the good life as long as multitudes around him are not willing to do likewise? If a young man is afraid, if he wants guarantees for his own safety, if he demands personal reward and satisfaction, if he has no chivalry in him, he will not embrace our religion. He will try to find for himself some form of religious insurance which will promise future safety on cheap mercenary conditions. Our kind of religion eternally demands manhood and heroism. Religion forever insists upon a way of life which once taken will make men brave, sincere, true, and trustful.

It follows that the religion which we believe in makes tremendous demands for money. It holds, indeed, that money has its only uses in developing character and manhood. Through the large and fine uses of the good things of this world, — its comfort, its art, its beauty, its luxuries even, — through the winning and sharing, and the just distribution of all these symbols of value, man learns what the real and perennial values are.

All wealth, therefore, is a sort of trust fund wherewith to work the deeds of beneficence. The true man gets money and spends money, not narrowly as he pleases, not with himself as the centre, but as one of a great brotherhood in beneficent service. The true man, indeed, gives as the cashier at the bank pays out money over the counter. Show the cashier that the check is good, and he pays accordingly, asking no questions. Show the true man, likewise, a real human need, and he is there to meet that need as he best can. The need may be over the sea in distant Armenia; the need may be in a frontier town in the West. He cannot be sure in advance how his money will serve; least of all things is it likely ever to bring him back thanks or reward. Show him only a genuine need, and his chivalry goes forth to meet it. Is he not a trustee to do whatsoever he can, to the utmost, with all the means in his power? So broadly, with such splendid

completeness, does the new thought of religion embrace the whole realm of wealth and property; so uncompromising is it in its requirements of utterly generous giving; so clear is its appeal to the chivalrous hearts of the rich and the poor alike. For it says, "All we have is of God, for love's sake and the doing of good. Use all we have, then, and always for love's sake."

Is there any appeal to our chivalry now for the maintenance of churches? May we feel about them in these prosperous times as earlier men felt in the days of persecution and war? For unless the appeal comes home to the heart of chivalry to maintain our churches they cannot be longer required. There may be those who say to themselves, "We have no longer use for organized religion or the services of any church; we have learned for ourselves the secret of religion; we have it in our libraries; we can sit down any Sunday morning and read about it in beautiful books. Is it not coming also to the world likewise in every new magazine, and even in the newspaper? What need, then, that we should continue to maintain expensive churches? Why should we trouble ourselves to publish the gospel, which in due time will publish itself?"

There is something plausible in these suggestions. If the church is only a private club-house, if it is mainly for the prosperous class, there is

little to stir one's enthusiasm in maintaining this kind of church. But this is not the church of which we are thinking. The religious club does not fit at all the chivalrous religion that the modern world wants.

You are familiar with the sight of the water towers on the hills over many of our towns. Some one might say, "What is the use of the water tower? Why should I be taxed to keep the level of the water above my own house? I have my private well and my excellent cistern. These are good enough for me." But no citizen to-day would dream of saying this word. Every one knows that as the level is high in the water tower, the safety, comfort, and health of the whole city are secured. The height of the level in the tower means that all alike can have the pure water. The height of the level means, when a conflagration arises, that the engines can put out the fire. So with the true thought of the church. The true church is the water tower of the city. Its life is for all. As the level is high, so the public safety, the public morals, the political life of the city is raised. When the level is high no real danger can come to the city. All alike, rich and poor, are fed and sustained, when the level of genuine religion rises high in the tower.

Here, then, is the appeal to our chivalry. What is good and needful for all, what serves to make

men honest, generous, humane, merciful, what ministers to faith in God, in fronting the mysteries of the world, appeals to every generous soul to maintain. We will pay whatever it costs; we will be willingly taxed to keep the level of the moral and spiritual life high in our towers.

All these things sum up the one supreme rule of life. It was Jesus' idea that a man must give himself utterly to the life of religion; no half-way course was possible. With him it was utter abandon. We entirely accept his idea to-day. The good life of religion is the one life possible. Here is the divine spirit breathing through all of us; its name is Duty, its twin name is Love. The moral laws that rule human conduct are its modes of expression. The appeal of God is the call to the chivalry latent in all of us; it is the call of God to the heart of his child; it is to come out of our selfishness; it is to lay aside all pride and egotism; it is simply to give ourselves altogether to the sway of the divine life of obedience. Where truth goes we will follow; what duty bids we will do; where love commands we will go. This is life; venture it and see.

"Straight from the mighty bow this truth is driven:
'They fail, and they alone, who have not striven.'
Fly far, O shaft of light, all doubt redeeming,
Rouse men from dull despair and idle dreaming,
Heaven's high evangel be, gospel, God-given, —
'They fail, and they alone, who have not striven.'"

[No. 17]

UNITARIAN

PRINCIPLES AND DOCTRINES.

By REV. C. H. BRIGHAM.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

UNITARIAN PRINCIPLES AND DOCTRINES.

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." — ROMANS xiv. 4, 5.

THESE words of Paul to the Romans are suitable to preface a statement of the principles and doctrines of the Unitarian sect of Christians. Those who deny to this sect the name of Christian show only their want of acquaintance with its writing and its preaching. It is very easy to make the charge of "infidelity" against a religious body; but to intelligent minds those who make this charge only exhibit their own want of charity or knowledge. Men do not build churches, hold public worship, support ministers, and spend money in works which look exactly like Christian works, and are just what other churches do which call themselves Christians, while all the time they are infidels or atheists. There are some absurdities so patent that they refute themselves, and bring confusion upon their prophets; and to say that Unitarians, who have churches in America, and England, and France, and Holland, and Switzerland, and Germany, and Austria, and have had them for hundreds of years; who pray in Christ's name, and sing hymns in his honor, and commend his example, and repeat his characteristic works, — to say that a sect of this kind is not "Christian," is one of the absurdities that would be incredible, if men were not found foolish enough

to utter it. A similar utterance was that of those Pharisees who ventured to say that Jesus could not be God's prophet, because he did not keep the Sabbath day in their fashion. More sensible men at once answered them that the acts of the healer, and the words of the teacher, proved sufficiently that he was a prophet from God. There were "blind leaders of the blind" in Judea 1800 years ago, and there are blind leaders of the blind in our time. And there are no persons whom these words of Jesus more accurately describe than those who deny the Christian name to a religious body of whose ideas and principles they are ignorant, which they take no pains to know, and who only care to foster the illusion of those who know as little of it as themselves. Paul has words of this class of men, too, in that first letter of his to Timothy, where he speaks of persons "desiring to be teachers of the law: understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

There is no need of refuting a charge which refutes itself to a thoughtful mind from the facts which cannot be denied. But a simple statement of Unitarian principles and doctrines, which might be made throughout from the very words of Jesus, may show more clearly the folly of the charge so loosely brought. We separate the principles from the doctrines, since the first are the working force of a religious body, the second only its temporary, possibly its shifting, opinions. Every church must be judged by its principles, by its ideas, by the ideas which move it and give it power. Now, no church has principles more distinctly defined, more universally admitted, than the Unitarian Church. The Episcopal, or Presbyterian, or Baptist, or Methodist bodies cannot be surer of their ideas than the Unitarian. There are certain principles, on which all our churches, all our ministers, all our men and women, communicants and non-communicants, what-

ever their different notions about one or another dogma; — certain principles, upon which all are agreed, which all in our body recognize and magnify.

1. The first of these principles is the grand Protestant principle of the *right of private judgment.* We hold to this in the fullest extent. We say that every man has a right to form his creed for himself, from his own investigation, thought, and conviction, and that no one has a right to hamper him in the process of finding this, or to dictate to him by authority what he shall believe; that there shall be absolute and perfect freedom for all men in coming to religious truth as much as to any other truth. We say that no councils, no synods, no catechisms, no fathers of the church, no doctors of the church, no preachers, no editors, whether of the ancient time or the present time, have a right to lord it over the souls of men, or to say what they *must* or *must not* believe. Every man must settle that for himself. Catechisms, councils, wise men, may help him in his decision, but cannot decide for him beforehand. This is a principle which every Unitarian Church in this country or in Europe maintains with all positiveness, and from which no temptation could draw it away. Every Unitarian asserts the right of every man to think for himself in coming to his saving belief.

2. A second principle of the Unitarian Church is, *that no one can be required or expected to believe what is contrary to reason*, or what seems to be so; that reason is the arbiter of truth, and that all truth is to be tested by reason. Unitarians hold that reason was given to man as his light and his guide, that this is the "logos" of which John speaks, and that the only faith which is good for any thing is that which reason accepts. All beyond this is profession, — phrases, but not truth; of no use to any one. All Unitarians are rationalists in this sense, that they do not wish or intend to say that they believe any thing which

seems to them to be mathematically, metaphysically, or morally untrue, contrary to the accepted laws of science or of soul, — any thing which is absurd to the reason, or revolting to the conscience. They will not believe a mathematical falsehood, or a falsehood of any kind, though it may be called a mystery and pretend to be revealed by an angel. Every church in the body, every intelligent member in the body, holds to this principle, however high or deep their thought of God and Christ may be. We are all rationalists in vindicating reason as the ground of faith.

3. A third principle of the Unitarian Church is, that *no man is infallible;* that no creed can be framed that shall be beyond the reach of error, or that shall not be open to change; that no form of words or even of ideas can set forth the absolute truth as it is in the mind of God. The wisest men make mistakes, and they make mistakes in interpreting and deciding religious truth as much as in interpreting and deciding any other truth. There is no infallible teacher, there is no infallible church, and there never can be. A thousand men, or a million men, agreeing to say the same thing, do not make that thing true. A doctrine is not true because it has been repeated for a thousand years in thousands of churches. The Catholic Church is not infallible, in spite of its claim to own the Holy Spirit. The Protestant Church, in any branch, is not infallible, in spite of its claim of going by the letter of the Bible. There never was a saint or a prophet, since the church began, who could say that he was exempt from the possibility of error. All Unitarians hold to their principle. We have no infallible standard in the word of any man, or in the words of any set of men.

4. A fourth principle of the Unitarian Church is, that *no creed can contain the whole of religion;* that religion, religious faith, cannot possibly be summed up in the words

of a creed. No formula, however ingeniously phrased and arranged, can possibly contain all that the soul believes and feels about man and God and the relation between them. Religion is broader, deeper, higher than any creed can possibly be. A creed may attempt to tell what faith is, may tell some things which we believe, but it falls short of expressing all our belief even now, much less all that we may believe hereafter. It may have five articles or thirty-nine articles, or a hundred articles, and still be inadequate. It may be very simple or very complex, very clear or very obscure, and still fail to conclude all faith. Some Unitarians like creeds, while others do not; but all agree that a creed can never be a finality, never be fixed for all time, and for the substance of all faith, never stand as the barrier to all farther religious advance. There is not one Unitarian, anywhere, in any Unitarian Church, who sums up the religion of all men, or even his own religion, in the words of any creed.

5. A fifth principle of the Unitarian Church is, *that there can be, and that there ought to be, no uniformity of religious faith.* Differences of faith are inevitable. Men cannot all believe alike more than they can look alike or act alike. Their faith will vary with their temperament, with their education, with their habits of thought, with the influences around them. Some will be able to believe what others cannot possibly believe. Some will accept readily what others cannot be persuaded to accept. All attempt to establish one creed for the various branches of the church is preposterous. Sects and parties in religious things are as natural and as necessary as they are in secular things. And it is just as impossible to force unanimity upon the major points as upon the minor points of the creed. All men cannot be made to see God in exactly the same way, or to find salvation in exactly the same way, more than they can be made to take precisely the same

view of Baptism and the Sabbath. This principle of permitted and inevitable diversity of religious opinion is one which all Unitarians, whether of the right wing or the left wing, most strenuously maintain.

6. A sixth principle of the Unitarian Church is, that *sincere faith is the only true faith;* that a mere form of words or phrases does not express a man's faith, unless he knows what he is saying. A man's creed is not what he utters with the lips, but what he utters with the mind and heart; not what he repeats following the dictation of a priest, but what he repeats out of the motion of his own soul. His real belief is not his *professed* belief, but his *honest* belief, be this much or little, be this identical with, or different from, his professed belief. Every thing which one adds to his honest conviction is superfluous, however it may coincide with the dogmas of the church. It is a principle of all Unitarian Churches, that saving faith is not in form of sound words, but in the sense of clear ideas; that sincerity is the prime requisite in all religious statements and confessions. They will never ask a convert to say that he believes one jot or tittle more than he does sincerely believe, even if he may be kept out of the kingdom of heaven by the defects of his faith. Strict and perfect sincerity is the avenue by which they would send forth their confession of belief.

7. A seventh principle of the Unitarian Church is, that *character is better than profession of any kind*, and that profession without character is good for nothing. The character of a man tells what he really believes better than his words can tell this. The acts of a man, his general tone of thought and habits of life, are the expression of his real creed. We look for his belief at what he is, and not what he says he is. We ask for better proof than any declarations, specially made. The creed is written in the life, and the world reads it from the man's life. Every

article must be practically witnessed by the general tenor of the man's acts or words. This all Unitarians assert, whether they have a creed or not, that the creed is second to the life, and must never be made the evidence or the substitute for the righteousness of the man. They infer no man's Christianity from the ease and readiness with which he repeats the phrases of the catechism; but they look first at the work which he does, at what he shows himself to be, whether his life and acts have any resemblance to the acts and life of the Christ. That is first, last, and always their test of the Christian character.

These which we have mentioned, — the right of private judgment; reason as the arbiter of truth; that no man is infallible; that no creed can contain the whole of religion; that difference of faith is necessary and inevitable; that sincere faith is the only true faith; and that life and character prove real belief; — are *principles* admitted by all Unitarians. Turning from these to speak of *doctrines*, we have to say at the outset, that no person can pretend to tell more than the average faith of the body to which he belongs. The Unitarian Church have not, and they never will have, any authoritative creed, any series of articles of which one may say, "that is the creed of the sect," any thing which corresponds to the Augsburg Confession of the Lutherans, or to the Westminster Catechism of the Presbyterians, or to the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church. One who attempts to tell the doctrines of the Unitarian body must gather these from his study of the books which have been published by leading writers, and from his general acquaintance with the men and women of the body. He can only speak from impressions, and he has no right to commit any one else to his opinion.

The first and highest doctrine of a religious system is the doctrine of *God*. If there is no doctrine of God, there can be no theology. What do Unitarians, in their average faith, believe of God?

1. They believe in the *existence* of God, and in his personal existence; that he is a personal being, with mind, will, feeling, and power, all infinite; that his attributes of infinite knowledge, infinite power, infinite love, all inhere in a substance which is real. They do not attempt to show the form of this great person, to show the mode of this infinite existence, to show what kind of a being a self-existing being — who never was born and who can never die — is. They simply say that they believe that there is a God: they are not atheists.

2. Then, in the second place, they believe in God as the *Creator* of all the things which are in the universe, giving in the beginning the germ of all worlds, and establishing the laws of generation and development, by which the universe has become what it is; that what we seem to see, and what we call *matter*, existed originally in the Divine thought; that God is the author of all being, mediately, or immediately; that all things come from God, on earth or in heaven.

3. In the third place, Unitarians believe that God is a *just God;* in other words, that he *rules the world by laws* which are sure, unvarying, impartial, and universal; that there is nothing in the universe which is not subject to law; that spiritual processes are as much under the dominion of God's law as material processes, — every being, high and low; a grain of sand, or a planet in its orbit; the flowers of the morning faded at night, or the cedar of Lebanon with its thousand years; the meanest reptile and the greatest man; every thing that has being, is subject to a law which the Infinite Ruler keeps for it. They say that God's will is just, because it is according to law, and that when men have discovered the law of any being's life, they have found the Divine justice concerning it. The sternest Calvinist could not believe in the justice of God more absolutely than the Unitarians believe in it.

The laws of God are his decrees, and he has decrees for every thing that he has made. There are no exceptions to these laws; what seem to men the exceptions, are only the result of laws which they have not yet discovered. God is the Infinite and Supreme Ruler of all the things that are made.

4. In the fourth place, Unitarians believe that God is a *loving and tender Father*, having in infinite measure all that love for his creatures which earthly parents have for their children; that God's creatures are his children; that he loves them all, blesses them all, wills the best good of them all, and is never weary of loving them. This fatherly love is his providence for them, — general for all together, special for every one. Unitarians do not believe in any partial providence, any love or care which is for one family and not for another, one people and not for another, one race and not for another, one church and not for another, one age and not for another; — but in a providence which extends to all ages, all churches, all races, all peoples, all families, all men, and all creatures, special always, because always present and never wanting. The fullest idea of an ever-present, ever-active, ever-tender, ever-kind love of the Father of all creatures is the Unitarian idea of Providence. In their idea God can never be a *hating* God, can never cease to love and care for any of his children. His love is incomprehensible, only because it is so immense and infinite, so much beyond all human love.

5. And the name of the Unitarian body suggests another peculiarity of their belief concerning God, — *in his Unity*. They believe that he is *one*, not divided in his Deity, not dual, or triple, or quadruple, or centuple, but strictly *one*. They believe that he exists in one being, and one person, that all his manifestations are gathered and concentrated in this single personality. They speak

of him as one person in describing his work. They address him as one person when they pray to him. His being is single and singular. It is not the society of Gods of which Unitarians think when they think of God. They keep this conception of unity because it is simple, is rational, and best explains the work of Providence and Creation. They believe in the unity of God as distinguished from Pagan Polytheism, or from philosophical Trinities, such as those of India and Greece, and such as those of the church-creeds. They find it entirely possible to worship God the Father without having any other God to divide his worship. And in worshipping God the Father, they worship the God whom Jesus himself worshipped, and whom his word has taught them to worship.

This, then, is what the Unitarians believe of God: that he exists as a person; that he creates all things; that he is just, as he rules by law; that he loves, as an Infinite Father, all his children; and that he is one God, not divided in his essence. How his being is, what it is, what is his form, they do not know, they do not care to know. The finite cannot comprehend the infinite. And they say of God, that no searching can find him out, and that all dictation of what he *must be* and what he *must do*, is foolish and irreverent. They affirm, as much as any sect, the mystery of the Godhead; only it is to them real mystery by its greatness and fulness, and not by its mathematical enigma. God is the eternal wonder of the human soul, so high, so vast, so complete in glory, that no thought can attain his being; — but he is in no sense the puzzle of the soul, vexing it continually by an existence which seems false and wrong, according to the laws of thought. The mystery of the Godhead in the Unitarian creed is not the part of God which lies nearest, but the outlying greatness which shades the farther circle, and is lost in the infinite distance.

Next to the doctrine of God, in a system of theology, is the doctrine of *Man*. What do Unitarians believe concerning Man?

1. They believe, in the first place, that in his physical nature man is *part of the orderly system of organic creations*. He makes one of the series of animated and organized beings. He has wants, instincts, desires, in common with other animals. He eats, drinks, sleeps, walks and runs, rises and rests, utters sounds, and communicates his feeling as beasts, birds, and insects do. The structure of his frame is not essentially different from the structure of other animal frames. It has the same proportion and adjustment of bone, and nerve, and muscle, of heart and brain. Man is animal, is born as animals are born, dies as animals die, in bodily organization, has the same limitations to his physical being. His spiritual nature exempts him from none of the physical laws. He is as much under these laws, subject to physical conditions, as the humblest creature of God. Anywhere on the earth, man has his place and his share in the physical order of the earth. Physically, he is not more wonderfully made than any plant or crystal.

2. But Unitarians believe, in the next place, that man is *at the head* of this series, is the highest and most important of all the visible works of God's hand. They believe in the dignity of his nature, that he is, and was meant to be, Lord of Creation, the master of the forces of the world, and of the lives below him; that he has larger powers, finer feeling, quicker perception, greater range of action, than any of the other beings with which he stands in line; that there is nothing above him in this world, and that the imagination can conceive nothing of which his nature is not capable. They believe that man has an intelligence more perfect, a will more energetic, than any brute beast; that he has, in short, a nature more spiritual than any, —

that man has *a soul.* Concerning the nature of that soul, they hold differing opinions. There is no uniform Unitarian psychology, as there is no uniform orthodox psychology. But upon the fact that man has a soul, they are generally agreed. The spiritual worth and dignity of the human soul is more insisted upon in the writings of the Unitarians than in the writings of any religious sect.

3. And then Unitarians believe that this spiritual dignity is *a possibility of the whole human race*, and is not the property or prerogative of any particular portion of the race. They are far from maintaining that all men are actually equal, in the life that they have, but they maintain that all men are potentially equal, in what they may become, and that they have the same spiritual rights. They have all the same Father, no matter where they are born, under what sky, in what corner of the earth, to what custom of life, to what kind of influence. The savage is a man, and has the rights of a man. The negro is a man, and has the rights of a man. The idolater is a man as much as the Christian. Woman is human, and human rights are hers. Unitarians have no dogma about the first human pair, or the first creation of the race; where it was; in Asia or America; when it was, six thousand years ago, or six hundred thousand years ago; in one pair or in one hundred pairs, or by development from lower races; but they believe in the unity of the human race, as men everywhere have moral sense and religious sense, and may be educated to a spiritual life and into a kingdom of heaven. All men are spiritually children of God.

4. Yet, on the other hand, Unitarians believe in the *actual imperfection of men.* None, anywhere, are as good as they might be, as good as they ought to be. All men are *sinners*, to use the common word, because they transgress laws which are appointed for their physical and spiritual welfare. This transgression is sometimes volun

tary and deliberate; men know that they are transgressing. Oftener it is involuntary, and is discovered only by the penalty which it brings. Unitarians say that even the best man, who is most careful of his heart and way, is not perfect; that he does, or says, or thinks what is not best, that he makes mistakes, that he violates law. There is no one who is in all things wholly righteous. On the fact of sin, Unitarians have a doctrine as positive as the doctrine of any sect. All men are sinners, all women are sinners, all children even, are sinners, in the sense that they do what they ought not to do, and leave undone the things which they ought to do. All who violate the laws of their being commit sin, and will be punished for that sin; the smallest or the greatest violation of law has its inevitable penalty.

The condition of man as a sinner, as a transgressor of law, makes it necessary to have a doctrine concerning Deliverance from Sin, — concerning what, in the ecclesiastical dialect, is termed "Salvation." What is the Unitarian doctrine of Salvation?

1. Unitarians believe that salvation is *deliverance from sin itself*, — from its influence, its mastery, its inner force and outer force. They do not expect or ask for deliverance from the penalties of sins committed, or from the penalties of sin while the sins themselves are retained. They believe that the only way of escaping the punishment of sins is to get rid of the sins themselves. They do not believe in sin as an abstraction, but in sins as realities The best way, and the only way, of getting rid of sin is by dealing with sins as realities, as things, and not as an influence in things. Deliverance from sin is wrought by rectifying the sources of transgression, by substituting right principles for wrong principles, right affections for wrong affections, a right direction of life for a wrong direction of life, by getting temptations out of the way, by purifying passions and appetites.

Unitarians believe that *the method of salvation varies* in the case of different persons. Where men are conscious of any violation of law, the first step must be repentance and a resolution to change from such violation. Where they are not conscious of such violation of law, the evil must be remedied by better surrounding influences and better education. The ordinary means of saving men from sins are training them from childhood in the way of virtue, giving them good precepts and good examples, encouraging all that is pure and righteous in their conduct and conversation, keeping around them an atmosphere of purity, removing all that imbrutes and debases. As so much of the sin of men comes from the circumstances of men, — their mode of life, their society, the influences around them, — they will be saved by setting these circumstances right, by making them more comfortable. As so much of sin comes from disorder in the physical frame, salvation comes in sanitary reforms, in better air, more light, more exercise, more physical health. Unitarians believe that men are saved by the application of the remedy exactly to the need; not by any arbitrary and artificial scheme which is the same for all, and has no connection with the special offence, but by the remedy that belongs to the disease. They would not deliver one person from melancholy by the same process which is to deliver another from drunkenness. They would not save one person from jealousy as another is saved from the habit of stealing. The salvation must be adapted to the offence, whatever that offence may be. Salvation has its difference in degree as well as its difference in kind. A great deal more of it is needed in some cases than is needed in other cases. Those who are spiritually wise need very little of it; those who are spiritually blind and ignorant need a great deal of it. It is much more difficult in some cases than in other cases; more difficult when the sin is of

habit and temperament than when it is of sudden temptation, and not natural; more difficult when it is bound up with interests and passions than when it stands aside from the daily course of life. There are some occupations and positions in life in which deliverance from sin is extremely improbable, some callings in which life seems only possible through continued sin.

Unitarians believe in change of heart, where the emotion and direction of the heart need to be changed, but the saving change in their theology means always *a change of life and action;* a coming back from violation of law to obedience to law. Salvation is the reconciliation of the life to the laws of God, the restoration of the transgressor to obedience. In this work all the change is in the life, spirit, and purpose of men; there is no change in the Divine Father or in his laws. God does not repent; only man repents. God does not alter his work or his counsels; only man changes his work and his counsel. Unitarians do not believe in any *transaction* between God and man in this matter of salvation, or any scheme by which Divine atttibutes are adjusted in a work which is wholly the concern of the creature. Change of heart and life does not merely guarantee salvation, not merely win this, — *it is* salvation. The salvation comes *in* the obedience to law, not merely *after* the obedience to law. Unitarians believe in future salvation as identical with present salvation; and hold that the only real salvation is present salvation. A man is saved in the spiritual world as he is saved in the natural world, — by obedience to the laws of his being.

The most important influence in this deliverance of the soul and life of man from sin is the *Christian religion.* This saves men in most civilized lands; though Unitarians believe, too, that heathen religions have saving qualities, and that the Chinese are saved from sin by the teachings

of Confucius, the Persians by the teachings of Zoroaster that men are made better by the moral truths even of idolatrous faiths. But they believe that the best of all religions — the religion which gives the highest, broadest, and most spiritual salvation — is the religion which holds the name of Christ. They accept Christ as the Saviour of those who become his disciples, and know his Gospel; and as indirectly the Saviour of many who are not called by his name, and are not conscious that they know his Gospel. The average Unitarian faith exalts the salvation which is from Christ, and gives it all the practical force which it has in any creed. No epithets of honor are too strong to describe this great salvation.

But the Unitarian idea of this salvation is not that it is mystical, unnatural, outside of the ordinary ways of influences, but strictly according to the natural way of influence. Christ saves men by his *teaching*, by telling them what is just, pure, good, true, noble, and divine, by giving them good instruction, by giving them right moral and religious ideas. He is the great teacher, whose words are wiser than those of prophets and sages. Christ saves men by his *example;* showing in his own conduct and conversation, as we read his biographies, what way of life, what kind of intercourse, makes men happy, and gives a clear conscience and the sense of God's nearness. Christ saves by *the spirit of his work*, which was in healing and blessing men. Christ saves by his *fortitude in suffering*, instanced in many ways, but especially by his death upon the Cross; which is, moreover, the supreme sign of self-devotion and sacrifice. Christ saves, as he shows in his word and his act, in his life and death, the incarnation of the Divine spirit, — the *life of a Divine Man.* In speaking and thinking of the salvation of Christ, Unitarians do not separate the human from the Divine in his nature, or one part of his life from another. Men are not saved by

his miraculous birth, or by his miraculous death, or by any thing in his history that is apart from practical adaptation to the human soul. Men are saved by forming his life within their lives, by becoming like him in spirit, in purpose, in virtue, and in faith, by the whole of his life, and by the general influence of his work. They are saved by the Christianity which has *got into the customs of society*, which has been fixed in the statutes and laws, which has entered into the relations of life, of business, of the State, or of the Church. Among Unitarians there are various views of the nature and the being of Jesus of Nazareth. Some think that he was different by constitution from all other men, with no human father; while others think that he was what his own Apostles supposed him to be, the son of Joseph the carpenter, and that he had brothers and sisters, as the narrative says. Some think that he lived in an angelic state before he was born, while others give to him no more pre-existence than to any man. Some think that his rising from the dead was in the flesh with which he died, while others think, like the women at the sepulchre, that it was a spirit which appeared in the form of man. But whatever these differing views about the kind and degree of the humanity of Jesus, all Unitarians believe that he saves men by natural influence on their hearts and lives, as he teaches them, shows them their sin, inspires them to seek better things, and demonstrates to them the kingdom of God, the man of God, and the life of God. All Unitarians find this sufficient, without any scheme or contrivance by which God has to appease his own wrath in the slaughter of an innocent person for the sins of a guilty world. In the Unitarian phrase, the word "atonement" always means, as it meant in the one place where it is used in the New Testament, — *reconciliation;* and that reconciliation is in bringing the souls of men to sympathy with God and his

laws. The Unitarian Christology is of one who prepares the souls of men to be the dwelling-place of God's spirit. of a mediator who gives to the soul the message and the substance of the life of God; who showed in a simple human life of compassion, love, and faithfulness, the visible inspiration of God.

And this leads us to say that Unitarians believe that there is a special influence of the spirit of God upon the souls of men. They believe that men are inspired, are quickened, are enlightened and energized by this divine influence; that it is in the word of prophets and in the acts of saints. They believe that there was inspiration in the ancient time, and that there is inspiration in the modern time; that there is a faith in spiritual things, a sight of spiritual truths, which is not the result of investigation, or of logical process, but which is given directly, which comes in conscious communion with God. They believe that *prayer* is the natural and the effectual method of this communion with God, that the Divine Spirit always comes near to the souls of men when they pray sincerely, when they pour out their souls in petition for spiritual gifts, or recognize the providence and love of a living God. Unitarians use prayer, and believe in it, though they attach to it no superstitious ideas, and do not think that its influence is in any sense supernatural. They believe in prayer as wholly according to the spiritual law; as the necessary way of gaining graces of the soul, and of holding conscious intercourse with God. They have not all the same philosophy of its working. Some think that it may move the mind of God, while others see its effective work in the minds and hearts of men. But all confess that it has its place in the way of the spiritual life, and that inspiration comes through prayer.

Unitarians believe, as really as Evangelical sects in their prayer meetings, that men may be and ought to be in-

spired to-day as truly as in any former day; as really, too, as Roman Catholics, that inspiration ought to be, and that it is, in the Christian Church. They have a very positive doctrine concerning *the Church.* They say that the Church is the spiritual union and fellowship of all Christian men and women, of all men and women who have the spirit of Christ in their hearts and are trying to do his work; that it is not to be fastened in any sectarian enclosure, or described by any sectarian name; that no denomination of Christians has a right to call itself "*the*" Church, exclusive of other denominations; that all righteous and God-fearing men and women, who are trying to realize the kingdom and justice of God, as revealed by Christ, are in the Church, members of the Church, whether they belong to any particular Church or not, whether or not they have taken any sectarian name; that the Holy Spirit admits men to the Church, and not the laying on of a priest's hands or the uttering of a few phrases; that a great many persons are in the Church who have never confessed their faith before men, and have never gone through any process of conversion that they have known. Unitarians believe in the "Holy Catholic Church" in the largest sense of that phrase, not as meaning Roman Catholic, or Anglo-Catholic, or Presbyterian Catholic, or Catholic with any local or sectarian prefix, but as meaning the whole company of those who have been influenced by the great salvation. The Church is as wide as the world and as wide as the presence of the Lord. They believe, as Paul believed, that even a multitude of the heathen, without knowing it, are in the Church of Christ; that the only Church which Christ formed, or intended to form, was this spiritual Church, which knew no distinction of name, and had no rejection of any who might wish to come into it. Unitarians do not believe in a Church which bars or bolts its doors to any that wish to come in, or which sets

in the gateway any barrier or test of human opinion or human creed. They believe in a free Church, not in a fenced Church, in a Church which is recruited always and is never full.

Unitarians have no doctrine of Sacraments, except as all obligations, all solemn promises, are sacraments. Baptism they call a sacrament, as it is a pledge of a man or woman for themselves, or for their children, that they will try to realize the righteousness of God in their own lives, or in the lives of their children. Unitarians have no holy-water, and pray when they baptize that the man may consecrate himself or his children by that *sign* of purification. The external act is only a sign, and they regard the manner of administration as of no importance, whether it is by touching the forehead or plunging the body. Marriage is a sacrament, as it is the promise of two souls to keep spiritual union, and to be faithful to one another in the most momentous of earthly relations. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, as it renews from time to time the promise of brotherly love. Unitarians attach no superstitious ideas to this so-called rite. It is not to them a repetition of the tragedy of Calvary, or a peculiar privilege of men initiated into a secret society, or a reward of religious merit; — in no sense an awful mystery. It is simply a memorial feast, calling to mind the last supper of Jesus and his disciples, and signifying the relation which the disciples of Jesus always bear to one another. Some Unitarians attach more importance to this memorial than others, but all agree in making it a *means* of religion, and not in any sense an end. None that I know would keep any person away from the Lord's table who may wish to come there, whatever his name, his profession, or his character. Unitarians believe that the communion of the Lord's Supper ought to be always free, as it was free in the beginning, and they have no measure of fitness for it. They make

their invitation to it as broad as was the invitation of Paul and Timothy. The Lord's Supper which they believe in is not the Mass of the Catholic Church, or the solemn symbol of the Evangelical elect, separated from the world, but the memorial feast as they find it in the Scriptures of the New Testament.

Unitarians take the books of the Bible as the record of the teaching of God to the Jewish people and to the early Christians through their wise men and their prophets. Their doctrine of the Bible is, that it is a collection of books on various subjects, — historical, biographical, poetical, and moral, of various value, but mostly with a religious bearing and purpose. The inspiration which they find in the Bible is an inspiration of the men whose story is told, not an inspiration of the words and letters. The Old Testament is the literature of the Jewish people; the New Testament is the early Christian literature. Unitarians prize the Bible as much as any sect; use it in their churches, use it in their homes, gladly assist in its circulation; but they do not make an idol of this sacred book, and worship its name. They prize it for the ideas which it holds, and the truth that it contains, and do not make more of it than it really is, or contend that it is what it never claims to be. To them the Bible is in the words of men, — Hebrew and Greek, Latin and English; and it has the characteristics of human thought and speech, even while it tells the will of God.

And the Unitarian doctrine of the Sacred Day is that it is the *Lord's Day*, which preserves in memory that great event in the life of Christ which took away from his followers the fear of death. They do not think of this day as the Jewish Sabbath, loaded with prohibitions, a day on which it is sinful to walk or ride, to laugh or to be joyful, but as a day for the exercise of all the best and freest natural affections. It is no more sacred in itself than any

other days of the week, and has no moral code peculiar to itself. The Unitarian doctrine is that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath; that there is no more reason for wearing sad countenances when men worship together than when they work together. The dignity of the day comes in the spiritual quickening which it gives; in its associations with what is beautiful, and pure, and friendly, and fraternal; in its separating men from selfish cares and joining them in common prayers for mutual good; in giving them experience of the heavenly life, which is the immortal life. On the Lord's day, men feel their true life, and they have this more abundantly.

And the Unitarian doctrine of death is, that it is *only a change in the condition of life*, not an extinction of life itself. It has no power to destroy the soul, but all its work is in taking vitality from the bodily frame, and leaving the parts of this to dissolve and enter into new material forms. The soul, the living spirit of the man, unclothed from its mortal part, assumes now a spiritual body, suited to a new world and new needs of life. The philosophy of the spiritual world is not uniform with Unitarian believers. Some have it nicely drawn out, and can make pictures of it, while with others it lies vague and undefined. But all that I know agree in rejecting the crude notion of the resurrection of the physical body, and in denying any necessary union between the soul and body after death has parted them. Most Unitarians believe in the recognition of departed friends, that souls which have been joined on earth in love will still keep union in the spiritual world; that in the disembodied world there are near societies, families and kindreds, though the physical ties exist no longer. There are some who think and speak of Heaven as a place; but the faith of the wisest treats Heaven as a state, which may be as real on the earth as beyond the earth.

In regard to rewards and punishments in the future life, Unitarians have no doctrine separate from their general doctrine of law and its violations. They believe that all good deeds have their inevitable reward, cannot fail to bring the happiness and peace which they deserve, but that the thought or expectation of personal happiness, here or hereafter, is *not the proper motive of Christian virtue.* Men should do good, because that is right, because that is the will of God, not because it will give them some individual blessing. So they believe that every sin has its penalty which cannot be escaped, and that the spiritual penalty of sin will endure as long as the sin lasts, and until it shall have wrought its due and needful reformation How long in time this will be, they cannot tell; but they believe that God's counsel will not fail through man's transgression, and that it is the Lord's will that not one of his rational creatures should utterly and for ever perish. They expect, in the consummation of all things, the universal reign of the Lord.

This is a rapid and concise statement of the average Unitarian opinion upon the principal points of religious doctrine. Unitarians claim that these views are rational, and can be maintained without doing violence to reason; that they are Scriptural, and can be justified from the spirit and from the letter of the Christian record, rightly read; that they are agreeable to the best instincts of the soul; that they are harmonious with the science of nature, and with the needs of human life; that children can understand them, and that the mature mind does not outgrow them; that they are good to live by, and that they are good to die by. This system of doctrine has satisfied, and still satisfies, the wisest men and the best men; men who are honored, trusted, and loved; men who are listened to respectfully, and are followed by the praise and reverence of the whole community. Three of the American

Presidents have been members of the Unitarian Church, and two others have given this faith in substance as their creed. Of Judges, Governors, Senators, Congressmen, elected by votes of the Evangelical sects, who have professed this faith, the list would be a very long one. The most distinguished of the writers of the country, in history, in poetry, in philosophy, in art, are nearly all Unitarians. The ablest public speakers find inspiration in these views of God and man. So far as great names lend credit to any doctrine, this Unitarian doctrine certainly has it. But it has in quite as large measure the better credit of noble and beautiful lives, of saintly men and women, who rise, a cloud of witnesses, to tell what it has done for them. The worst bigot in Massachusetts would not dare to call Governor Andrew an "infidel," though he was as faithful to care for his Sunday-school class in the Unitarian Church of the Disciples as for the wounded in the hospitals and the soldiers in the field. No faith has ever been more ready to prove itself by works of love and mercy than this faith. If it has not sent many missionaries to fight against idolatry in heathen lands, and substitute for this idolatry the creeds of Augustine or Calvin, it has sent far more than its proportion of missionaries into the waste places at home, into the haunts of wickedness, to convert the blind, and the erring, and the sinful. No one can deny that Unitarian Christianity makes ministers of practical righteousness.

Unitarians are not indifferent to the good-will of the Christians around them. They do not like to be misrepresented, or to be treated as outlaws, even by ignorant and bigoted men. But they can stand alone, and are not to be driven from their position by any slanders. They will hold fast to what they believe to be truth, even if they are denounced as unbelievers, or are denied a place in the great salvation. They want no Heaven which is won by

compromise or hypocrisy; and they will lose the society of men whom they respect rather than be false to the word of God as it is spoken to their souls. They hold their doctrine not as a finality or a perpetually binding creed, but as ready always to revise and improve it, as the spirit of God shall give them more light and knowledge. They own no master but the great Teacher, the great source of spiritual wisdom, and they are content to abide his judgment. They ask no triumph or success, but the triumph which truth shall give them, as shown in the logic of their argument, and as shown in the lives of their confessors.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

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I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 18]

WHAT O'CLOCK IS IT IN RELIGION?

BY

REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE, D.D.

One Drop of Ink
Makes Millions Think.

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

WHAT O'CLOCK IS IT IN RELIGION?

Somebody's clear thinking underlies all rational action. Though the actor, in any department of life, may scout creed and theory, and though he may say truly that he neither has nor wishes to have anything to do with either, yet he cannot help himself. Every step he takes, every enterprise he engages in, is the result of the attempted embodiment of somebody's theory. The farmer, for example, may plod along in his accustomed way year after year: he may never have spent an hour in his life in study or thought concerning soils or dressings or crops; he may do merely what his father did before him; and even that father may have had no theories, but only inherited habits; yet it remains true that somebody thought and experimented, and what has come to be mere custom was once purpose and plan.

Apart from some accidental improvemen that has been stumbled into, every new ste taken is the result of new theorizing, of reconsideration of the past, of present co ditions, and of future possibilities. Suc reconsideration is always in order whe there is a pause and time to reflect. Par ticularly is this true in an age like the pre ent. For, though we talk often enough o this as a "transition time," I think it i only a few who appreciate that we are pas ing through the most profound and fa reaching revolution of religious and ethic thought and theory that the world has eve seen. The change from the Ptolemaic the Copernican theory of the universe wa superficial compared with it; though the the alarm was raised that all religious belie was in danger. Even the change from Ju daism to Christianity was comparativel superficial; for then it was chiefly certai Messianic ideas and certain rites and cere monies that separated the old and the new But now what is there that is not involved God, man, duty, destiny,—all are up for reconsideration so radical as the world ha never known.

We often speak of "the duty of th hour." But, before we can perform it, w need to know the hour. And the differenc in the running of the vast multitude of re ligious clocks is so great that as yet ther

is no sort of an agreement. For, as Pope says,—we forgive him his grammar in view of the necessity of the rhyme, and for the sake of the force of his thought,—

"'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own."

We have made one advance since Pope: we have established "standard time" for watches and clocks; but, alas! our "judgments" still run very much as they please. This is not, as I believe, because there is no "Sun time" in religion, but because people are so attached to their old ways of reckoning that they are not willing to admit that their private chronometers are ever wrong. There is a good deal of "human nature" in this; for, when our present standard time was adopted, there were a good many who seemed very much afraid that they would lose something out of the twenty-four hours if they gave up the old methods of reckoning.

As all of us who are here wish, above all things, to do the duty of the hour, it seems to me that we cannot engage in a more profitable task than that of trying to find out just what the hour is; for the hour will tell the duty. You will not impute to me the presumption of attempting to set the time for you, or of claiming that my private watch is the standard. My task is a much

more humble one than that. I do not expect to tell you anything that you do not know. I shall only undertake, like the writer of the Second Epistle of Peter, "to stir you up by putting you in remembrance." I only ask you to glance with me along the pathway of the world's religious evolution, with the one purpose of finding out where we are, what time it is in the world's day, and so to what step of advance we are invited by the coming hour.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS.

We need to recall to mind at the outset—what we all well know—that the aim, the purpose, of all religions, in all ages, has always been one,—the endeavor on the part of the worshipper to get into more desirable relations with his God. This one thread of common purpose has run through them all, so binding them like beads on one string. This fact gives us an added respect for the first crude and barbaric religions, and suggests a deeper harmony underlying all the apparent discords in the fugue of the religious progress of the race, where the same theme continually reappears in the midst of a thousand variations. It will be seen that religion is nothing else but man's eternal search for the secret of life,—"that they might have life, and might have it more abundantly." It is the endless endeavor for "reconciliation with God."

As this thought is fundamental to our whole theme, perhaps it will be well to make it a little clearer. It is of no importance for us to raise the question as to precisely what was the lowest and so the earliest form of manifestation of the religious life. We may leave that for scientific research to settle at its leisure. For, whether it was worship of fetich or ghost, one point at least is clear. It was the recognition on the part of man of a power not himself, a power invisible and mysterious, that was able to hurt him or to help him. He believed that by certain gifts or rites, certain prayers or praises, he could ward off the wrath of this power or win its favor and assistance. Four points are here involved :—

1. These primeval men had certain ideas as to the nature and disposition of this invisible power.

2. They had certain ideas as to their own nature and so as to the relations in which they stood to this power.

3. They had an ideal of certain better or more favorable relations that might be established between themselves and this power.

4. The outward and active manifestation of their religious life, whatever form it took, was only and always the attempt on their part to establish these better or more favorable relations. This formula will cover and

include every religion that the world has ever seen or ever can see. And it is a striking fact, and suggests remarkable parallels, to note that it covers all science as well. Science has its theory of the power not ourselves (whether material or spiritual) out of which we have come and on which our destiny depends. It has also its theory of man, and of his relation to this power. Then it has its theory of a better relation to be established by a wider and higher knowledge. And, last, its hope of civilization depends on there being brought about a more complete adjustment of man to his environment. So, when Paul talks about "reconciliation to God" and science speaks of "adjustment to the enviroment," one is only the religious, the other the secular way, of saying what a deeper analysis reveals as substantially the same thing. For every theist must look on the material world as only the external manifestation of that one Life in which "we live and move and have our being," the two together making the complete physical and spiritual environment of the whole man.

When, then, the early worshipper engaged in any religious act, he was only endeavoring to get into a closer and more helpful relation to his god. How he would do it, what particular act he would perform or what internal disposition he would cultivate, all

this would depend on what he thought of his god, and what he imagined he would want him to do. Whether he would sacrifice an animal or some fruit or his own child; whether he would pray, or chant a hymn, or invent some elaborate ceremonial; whether the service should be in one place or another; whether it should be under the open sky or in some temple; whether it should be under some sacred oak in a valley or on some mountain top,—all this was determined entirely by what he supposed the will of his god. When the barbarian was about to start out on the hunt or to battle with some hostile tribe, he did what he supposed his god desired as the condition of his assistance. When the Jews thought Yahweh was angry with them, and was punishing them with a pestilence or by giving them over to the Philistines, they did what they supposed their deity desired as the condition of turning away his anger. When the Christians of the Middle Ages were engaged in their crusades for the rescue of the holy sepulchre from the hands of the infidel, they did what they supposed God wanted them to do as the condition of success. And, when the crops of our Puritan forefathers were suffering from drought, they did what they supposed God desired as the condition of sending them rain. And so to-day, however our ideas may have changed,

the principle determining human action is forever the same.

At first there were many gods to be pleased; and the ways of pleasing them were many, and sometimes contradictory. The question of morality—that is, of conduct as between man and man—had not then been raised as having anything to do with pleasing the gods. They were only a sort of invisible sultans, having in their hands the power of life and death and governing according to their own capricious wills. So that religion might be unmoral, immoral or moral, according to the supposed character or wish of the god; for his will superseded all other considerations. Men were not supposed to have any rights as against the supreme power.

In the progress of religious evolution, men came, after a time, to think of some *one* God as supreme, not only over men, but over all other gods as well. Jupiter became the "king and father of gods and men." Yahweh also grew to be "King of kings and Lord of lords." Then the lesser deities ceased to exist at all, or became degraded to the position of attendant or inferior spirits.

But a process more important than even this, if possible, also went on. God ceased to be thought of as force only, the heavenly despot, and became the ideal and embodi-

ment of righteousness. Men reached the high level of asking, "Shall not the King of all the earth do right?"

In the earlier ages there was no need of any devil. The varying characters or the changing caprices of the many gods were sufficient to explain the ills of life as well as its good. But when the people came to believe in one God only, and in him as just and good, they could not think of him as the author of evil. The existence of a great adversary became to them a philosophical necessity as an explanation of physical and moral evil.

From this brief review of the origin, growth, and change of religious ideas, it becomes plainly apparent that religion springs out of, depends upon, and adapts itself to the scientific conception of the universe that obtains in any particular age. So it is no accident that the first word of Genesis is a scientific word. It is no accident that all religions start with a cosmogony. What kind of a power is this which is not myself? And by what methods does he govern the world and man? These are the first questions, the ones that precede all others. And the shape the religion takes is the answer to these questions. For man must be forever seeking to do that which he really believes God wants him to do, in order that he may gain eternal life. The

question of the young ruler who came to Jesus is the one, age-long, always-repeated question of the race. And the answer to it must always depend on what people think about God, their own nature and condition, and so their present relation to God.

THE ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY.

We have now reached the point where I wish to place before you—what you all know well—the main outlines and essential features of what has been orthodox Christianity for fifteen hundred years. I say fifteen, and not eighteen, because it took two or three centuries for the shifting outlines to settle into something like fixed relations to each other. We need to have those outlines clearly in mind, in order to grasp the full significance of the movements now going on.

We need not confuse the discussion by raising any of the minor questions, such as the date of creation, the precise nature of Jesus, the changing theories of the atonement, or the methods of inspiration. We need only to set down in order those points of Orthodoxy that are so vital a part of the system that, when any one of them is taken away, what is left ceases to be Orthodoxy. What are these points?

1. The creation of man and the putting him here on this earth as a place of probation.

2. The fall of man and his resulting condition as lying under the everlasting curse and wrath of God.

3. The incarnation, life, teachings, suffering and death of the second person of the Trinity as making it possible for God to be "just and the justifier of him who believeth."

4. Everlasting life for those who accept the atonement and everlasting death for those who do not.

5. The Bible as a divine revelation, without which any such scheme of the universe could never have been known, and would never have been thought of.

This is essential Orthodoxy; that is, Christianity as it has been popularly held and taught. All these points are essential; for, if you take any one of them away, the whole reason for keeping the rest of them ceases to exist. Give up the old idea of Edenic innocence and probation, and the fall loses its significance. Give up the fall, and there is no call for the stupendous miracle of the incarnation, with all its accompaniments. Give up everlasting punishment, and what becomes of the scheme that came into existence for the sole purpose of saving men from it? Give up the

infallible Bible, and there is no reason for supposing that any of the rest is true. For we have to-day much more rational as well as more merciful ways of explaining the existence of pain and evil, and neither philosophy nor science would ever dream of resorting to such theories, in order to account for the actual condition of the world. And yet I have talked with more than one "orthodox" minister within the year who believed no single one of these doctrines in the historic sense of the creeds, though these creeds are still held on high as the banners of the faith. But it is not the attitude of the orthodox toward Orthodoxy that now concerns us. We are now dealing with the liberal religious attitude toward all the great questions involved.

Let it now be kept clearly in mind that Orthodoxy is not only a religion, it is also a cosmology, a theory of things; and that the two are inextricably intertwined with each other. At the outset, also, it shut in its own face the door of any change or advance by making all hinge on the claim that its whole scheme of things had been divinely and infallibly revealed. So that Dr. Richard S. Storrs was right in pronouncing the idea of a progressive theology an absurdity. For, if the Bible is not understood, it does not reveal anything; and, if it is, then what it reveals is eternal

and unchanging truth. The orthodox claim has always been that the Bible reveals the creation of the world, the creation of man, his nature, his career, his destiny. So Dr. Jonathan Edwards was right in conceiving the entire outline of the world's career as being only "the history of redemption." According to Orthodoxy, this sums up the reason for the earth's existence. And any true orthodox church must have for its one object and aim the saving of men from the effects of the fall. Anything and everything else is purely incidental.

COSMOLOGY AND RELIGION.

It was about thirty-six years after our city of Boston was founded that "Paradise Lost' was licensed to be published in the city of London. I mention this date, in order to refresh your memories with the extreme modernness of the series of changes that have given us the new universe in which we are living. The framework of Milton's great epic was the theory of Ptolemy. The poet, indeed, was familiar with what he probably regarded as the "speculations" of Copernicus,—very much as so many modern theologians regard the teachings of Spencer and Darwin to-day,—for he makes Adam and the angel talk them over. But the angel gives Adam the advice, which has always been dear to the typical theologian's

heart, that it is not well to try to know too much, and that better than all knowledge is obedience to the constituted authorities.

Now this recently created universe of Ptolemy, made to be the probationary home of man until the scheme of redemption should be worked out, and then to be destroyed, was admirably adapted to the use of the poet. It is suggestive of a good many vital questions to consider what Milton could have done with his theme if he had tried to make his story fit the framework of the Copernican universe. He would have found it simply impossible to make it at home there. It fits the old universe as a picture fits its frame. But it touches the new one nowhere, and stands in no sort of vital relation to it. This fact greatly emphasizes what I have already said as to the intimate and inevitable connection between the cosmology and the religion.

Taking "Paradise Lost," then, as our modern point of departure, let us note certain things that have occurred. In this presence, I need do no more than indicate them; for they are familiar to all scholars, —so familiar indeed that their modernness is apt to be overlooked and their significance but half appreciated. Three great thought-revolutions have been accomplished, —so victoriously, so completely accomplished

that there is no possibility of the world's ever taking, in these directions, one backward step. These three are a revolution in physics, a revolution in criticism, and a revolution in biology. Before the face of the enormous advances of knowledge in these three directions, the old earth and the old heavens have fled away, and there is found no place for them. Let us briefly note, not because you do not know them, but merely to mark the line of separation between the old and the new, their reach and their inevitable consequences.

The names of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Newton, Young, Franklin, Dalton, Spencer, these and those of their coworkers call to mind the steps forward that have been taken in physics. The ten concentric, crystalline spheres of Ptolemy and Milton formed a circle which reached half-way from the floor of heaven down to the dome of hell. When Satan and his hosts were cast out, it took them only nine days to fall past all these spheres and across the intervening chaos to the bottom of everything. This indicates the size of the old universe. The earth was fixed at the centre, while the local and visible God held his court just overhead. When now we remember that it takes light three years and a half to reach us from that sun which is our nearest neighbor, and that then we stand only on the

threshold of sun-lighted pathways that lead on and on to infinity, we get an impression, at least, of the enormous transformation that our thought of the universe has undergone since Boston was founded. What a change it is, and how recent! The baby-house world of Ptolemy has been "put away," along with other "childish things," by the growing mind of the race. And along with it have been "put away," also, the God that ruled it and the man that inhabited it.

For the revolution in biology, instead of a man created perfect and placed in Eden six thousand years ago, has given us a man starting on the border-line of the animal world perhaps two hundred thousand years ago and developing by natural processes to what we see him to-day. And the revolution in criticism has completely changed our conception as to God's method of working in the origin and growth of religions and their relations to each other. We have no longer one perfect, supernatural religion coming down from heaven, set over against all others labelled natural and false. We are compelled to think of them all as man's attempts to "feel after" and find the God who is "not far from every one of us." So it is no longer the business of one to conquer and subjugate all the rest, but rather of all together to grow to unity, as they grow nearer to the truth which is the one revela-

Associa-
Massa-

tion of God. In this old universe, it was natural enough to think of God as an external and visible king, issuing or revoking arbitrary decrees, as other kings did. It was natural enough to think of his subjects as rebelling against him, as other subjects did. Then it was natural enough to think of him as devising some plan by which, while maintaining his authority, he could pardon such as chose to accept his arbitrary conditions. It was natural enough to think of him who had wrought out the plan of salvation as interceding for the forgiveness of those who sought it, for his sake. It was natural enough to think of the endless rejection of those who declined the one and only offer of pardon. It was natural enough to think of interference with the regular order, of miraculous answer to prayer, of a supernatural being taking temporarily the form of a man, and of an infallible revelation. All these things fitted into the old universe.

It is seen, therefore, how naturally the religious formula we have had in mind all the way along adapts itself to and explains the old religion. First, such was the thought of the universe. Secondly, the popular thought of God was that of an external, arbitrary ruler, whose will made right, and who demanded absolute obedience on the part of his creatures. But man had fallen into

rebellion, and was under sentence of eternal death. Thirdly, God thereupon devised a scheme of salvation, according to the terms of which he was willing to save those who accepted it. Those who refused simply remained "lost," and went "to their own place." Fourthly, the practical work of religion necessarily became the attempt to get as many as possible to accept the conditions of pardon. To this one, only end, all religious agencies were necessarily directed. All rites, ceremonies, sacrifices, services, hymns, prayers, sermons, had this one aim in view. All instruction must aim at this. Charitable work might be done; but it was only incidental. Anything that diverted attention from this one thing was an evil. The world was in rebellion, at enmity with God, so absorption in its affairs was dangerous. The temporary relationships and loves of earth were not to be permitted to interfere. He who doubted or denied this infallible truth was an enemy of souls, and it was merciful to put him out of the way by any necessary means. All these ideas were natural outgrowths and necessary parts of the old universe.

But now one of God's age-long hours has struck, and the universe has become a thing of the past. That world has gone. That God has gone. That man has gone. That loss has gone. That salvation has gone

That heaven and hell have gone. The night is past, the sun is risen, and the morning is here. No power can turn back the hand on the great dial of God; and the hand inevitably marks a new hour in God's great day.

THE NEW UNIVERSE.

Let us wake up, then, and note what o'clock it is in religion, where we are, and what comes next. We are in an illimitable "universe," of which we can conceive neither beginning nor end. Our "God" is immanent in this universe, its life and soul. The most distant star is the witness of his power, as the nearest and tiniest flower is of his presence and his beauty. He is nearer to us than breath or thought; he besets us behind and before, and lays his hand upon us. His laws are no longer any externally imposed statutes, but the constituent and vital laws of things, equally inherent and natural in the dust beneath our feet and in the highest moral life or the loftiest range of spirit. Our "man" is not the wreck of a once perfect creation, but God's finite child, slowly growing in the midst of an infinite universe, and with an infinite outlook ahead. Our religion, then, if it is to be true, must free itself from the inherited taints, the tattered rags and patches of the outworn scheme, and face and match the unspeakable grand-

eur of the new universe in which we are living. It is in its failure to do this that I read the secret of the present weakness of the Church and its loss of grip on the vital interest of the earnest men of the world. It has become a venerable antiquity instead of the living power of the living God.

It is not, however, the death of religion that we are witnessing, but its renaissance. It is the phœnix that rises from its own ashes and plumes its wings for a loftier flight. But before we are ready to grasp the living work of the living religion of the living God, and meet the needs of the living man, it seems to me that we need to clear our heads and unburden our hands of many things that, while sacred to sentiment and memory, are yet so much a part of the old order that they confuse the popular mind as to our attitude, and so hinder the effectiveness of our work. I think it is true that the great majority of orthodox religionists still look upon Unitarians as being only disciples of "the spirit that denies." We have not yet made the impression, to which we are called by the new revelation that God has vouchsafed to us, of being the leaders in a new forward movement that promises to give the world a more positive and grander religion than the past has ever known. We have not taught them yet that our infidelity is only

a larger belief. We have not yet made them know that the temporary confusion and trouble of the world are only a necessary part of the process of readjustment to an unspeakably magnificent enlargement of our mental, moral, and spiritual environment. But, before we are fully prepared for this, is it not necessary that we ourselves turn squarely and completely toward God's new sunrise?

THE ATTITUDE OF ORTHODOXY.

And first, in order to this, is it not well for us to get and keep a firm grasp on the real attitude of Orthodoxy toward God's real world? It is not only, as many seem to think, a toning down here and there, the wearing off of this sharp corner, the changing of that emphasis, the surrender of some harsher feature. It is that the whole scheme is utterly discredited, and destined to pass away as completely as the world-framework of "Paradise Lost" has disappeared. It is more than a figure of rhetoric that couples them together; for the story of the poem is the soul of the system. Coming into being for the sole and only purpose of "saving" men from the supposed effects of the supposed "fall," it and the "fall" must go out together. The moral sense of the world was shocked by Mr. Moody's saying, "Morality doesn't touch

the question of salvation." But Mr. Moody was right, on the basis of the old theory. When a man is guilty of high treason, the government does not ask as to whether he pays his debts and keeps on good terms with his neighbors.

But the moment the ascent instead of the fall of man is believed in, that moment Orthodoxy receives its death-blow. It is as dead to-day as was Paganism when Paul first preached at Rome. It is as dead as was Ptolemy's universe when Galileo first saw the moo s of Jupiter. And as the priests at Athens, who looked with contempt on the "babbler" from Judea, did not delay the clock of God, and as the bishops of Padua, who refused to look at the moons that Galileo's telescope revealed, did not delay the coming change, so no amount of pride in the past, no reaction or revival of old ideas, can have power to turn back, by even one degree, the advancing shadow on the dial of time.

In speaking of the old faith as dead, and in so sharply outlining the new, of course it will not be thought that I deny that men have found, and are finding, the real God and the noble life under the old system. Men have always been finding God under all systems. But because some live comfortably under the czar, is that any reason for not living and dying for freedom for all? The old

will live long enough. It will live as long as any considerable part of it helps and comforts mankind. But, nevertheless, is it not true that the good is in spite of, and not because of, the false theories? And, whatever human energy is devoted to keeping alive the system, is turned away from the essential things. That which has helped in the old is not dead, but more vital still in the new.

Since this is so, does it not follow that, so long as the orthodox churches remain, it will be just so much time and effort and enthusiasm and pious endeavor directed to false issues, and therefore subtracted from the real work that needs to be done? For the system does not recognize the real source of the world's ills, and so its attempts to heal are misapplied. Or, if they do turn to other methods and other aims, it must be at the cost of loyalty to the system to which they still vow their adhesion. While, then, we should love and keep on good terms with all men, we should, above all, remember the grandeur and glory of our mission. I should be glad to think myself mistaken when, now and then, I fancy I see signs on the part of some Unitarians of a willingness to be patronized by the older churches in a way that is a credit to neither side. I say nothing of the carelessness, the lack of seriousness, or the in-

tellectual imbecility of those who send their children to be educated in the old and discredited theories; but I refer now to tenders of sympathy on the part of Unitarians, such as a clear headed orthodox minister, or convention of ministers, could not honorably accept. I am well aware that not all exchanges of courtesy come under this condemnation. Each side must recognize that, spite of the most radical differences, the other is doing a vast amount of good. And a recognition of this is not only generous: it is justice as well. It is not against this I am pleading. It is only for such a dignified self-respect as shall make us conscious of the great fact that we have more to give than any one else has for us to take; for the two systems cannot live together. And our new and larger revelation is a command of God. We are either nothing, or we are prophets of a new development of religion. If we are right, they must come to us. We cannot go to them. Let us, then, give up the attitude of apologists, and preach the gospel of the new age.

THE CHRISTIAN NAME.

Concerning one other point do we not need to make our attitude a little clearer before we can be ready for the great work that waits us? How are we Christians? The old scheme that has so long worn the name is passing away beyond recall. In

what sense can we keep the name without hopelessly confusing our new universe with the old one? Two things let us bear in mind. First, whatever name we choose to go by, we are in this new world, and the facts of our changed situation are facts. And, secondly, is it not well to recall that Jesus did not originate the system called "Christian," nor did he give it the name? Neither his honor, then, nor the significance of his work, is necessarily bound up with the question. We ought to be able to treat it dispassionately. I even think that Jesus belongs to us as he does not to the old churches. For he was the great liberal of his age. And, in the mouth of Paul, his name is the watchword of liberty. In his name, the great apostle led the way out of all narrow limits into the broad world of humanity. And, rightly using it, in a way not to be misunderstood, I would gladly write his name on the banner of our great movement. But, in using it, let us claim him for what he was, and not be mistaken as indorsing the common claim,—a claim that he would not indorse, were he with us to-day. Let us vindicate his name in being true to our own.

I suppose it is largely a matter of definition. A Boston clergyman, referring the other day to a certain list of names of ministers, said, "There is not a Christian among

them: they are all either Jews or Unitarians." Let us see for a moment. When a boy, I remember that I used to hear my mother say of a certain Universalist woman, neither "converted" nor a church member, "She is a Christian, if ever there was one." I suppose she meant only that she was good. Again, those who had been "converted" and had united with the church, I used to hear spoken of as having "become Christians." Then there is the sense in which the Pope of Rome uses the word, and which would shut out even the gentle-tongued Boston clergyman just referred to. The evangelical uses it with a different meaning still, taking his revenge, perhaps, on the pope, by leaving him out under the name of "antichrist." Once more there is what the Hindu means when he speaks of a Christian. Then, again, there is the Unitarian, who says he is willing to take "the Sermon on the Mount, and the two great Commandments," as the substance of his Christianity. In one sense, of course, we are born Christians, and cannot help ourselves if we would. We have entered on the great Christian inheritance: we breathe its spirit and temper.

One thing, at least, is clear. Beyond all intelligent question, Jesus shared the intellectual limitations of his time. None of the most zealous churches, none of those

who bow lowest at the mention of his name, ever even dream of such a thing as attempting to put in practice most of his social or economic theories. He had not a word to say to help settle any of the great intellectual problems of the world. And there is no hint, not merely of his knowing anything about the kind of universe in which we are actually living, but even of his anticipating that the world would ever be called on to face its present problems. The sublimity of his character, then, and the significance of his work, are to be found chiefly in the moral and spiritual attitude of his soul toward God and man. Nothing can be finer than this. Combine this spirit with the scientific method and the best knowledge of the growing world, and, if the result can be called Christianity, I, for one, will rejoice with my whole soul to wear the name of Christian. But no church has yet been founded on the spiritual attitude of Jesus. And the systems of thought that have been called by his name have been systems not constructed out of the materials of his teaching, and not predominantly characterized by his spirit or temper.

HINDRANCES OF PHRASE AND FORM.

But, whatever we call it, we are in a kind of universe such as Jesus apparently never thought of; and, under cover of the senti-

ment, the love, the reverence, that so fitly attach themselves to his name, there still linger on, in our ecclesiastical usage, ideas, forms, phrases, assumptions, that do not fit into the universe as we know it, and that seem to me to hinder clear conceptions of our real situation and vital work. I refer to a few of these with much hesitation; for I am aware that not only older, but better men will differ from me. Still, I must be true to what seems to me the logic of our situation.

1. However lofty the niche we assign to Jesus, and however glorious his work, still he is not, in any intelligently accepted sense of the words to-day, either our "Saviour" or our "Redeemer." Jesus never used them of himself; and they belong to a system of theological thought that not only we no longer believe, but which is squarely in the way of what we do believe. The English tongue is capable of clearly expressing the deepest and highest truth we are ever likely to grasp; and a new form of words that is true is more sacred than any old form that conveys a meaning that contradicts our faith. Since we do not believe that man is "lost," the words that not only imply the false position, but obscure the true one, ought to be avoided. If we say we mean that man is lost, in the sense that he is out of the right road, then two things: first, we

know that that is not what people understand us to mean by the word; and, secondly, it follows that not Jesus only, but all those who help men to find the way, are saviours.

2. Then ought we any longer to close our prayers with the words, "for Christ's sake," or those of similar import? An Oriental sultan may choose his favorite for prime minister, and, while refusing petitions on the ground of mercy or justice, may grant them for his favorite's sake. But do we still so think of God? And does not that whole conception of prayer even pass away with the old universe of which it was a natural enough part? I cannot help thinking it an imputation against the character of God and Jesus both. The whole orthodox picture of Jesus as interceding in heaven, and of God as being prevailed on so to be kindly and good,—is it not repulsive to our sense of mercy and justice both? Had it not better die with the theory to which it belongs?

3. And along with these shall we not leave behind us the whole scheme of Messianism, and all that goes with it? To us Jesus is not the "Messiah" in the Jewish sense. He is not the "Messiah" in any historic Christian sense. Do we still look for his "coming" in any sense that justifies our clinging to any of the fragments of the

worn-out theory? That whole idea belonged to the other universe, not to the one we are living in.

4. Having given up the infallibility of all books, shall we not have also to give up the infallibility of all men? The record is hopelessly confused and contradictory. If Jesus is infallible, whose Jesus, which Jesus? The Jesus of the last of Mark is not the Jesus of the parable of the Prodigal Son.

At the dedication of Unity Church in Chicago after the fire, I was to read the Scripture lesson. As our good Dr. Furness was to preach, I asked him what I should read. Having selected a chapter of John, he ran his finger down the page, and, pointing out a certain verse, said, "Don't read that: Jesus never said that." But, as its sentiment was quite in accord with much attributed to him, I could not see why he "never said that," except that Dr. Furness could not bear to think that his Jesus entertained any such feeling. But have we a right to pick and choose, and so make a Jesus "in our likeness"? If so, is it not our own infallibility we are believing in, and not that of Jesus at all?

5. Have we any better right to think of any man that ever lived as perfect? Old Father Taylor was once asked if he thought anybody else had ever lived as good as

Jesus; and he replied,—orthodox as he was, —"Yes, thousands of them." In the sense in which he meant it, perhaps thousands have been "perfect." But, beyond the fact that we actually know so little about the daily personal life of Jesus, it seems to me incongruous to think of any person as either infallible or perfect, when we think of all men alike as groping their way along the dimly lighted pathway of an infinite universe. Such ideas belonged to the old universe: they do not belong to the new. I would by no means be understood as wishing to sweep away all the forms, rites, symbols, rituals, and phrases that are saturated with the religious spirit and consecrated as vehicles of religious life by centuries of sacred association. The most of these, indeed, are human, and belong to all reverent souls. Most of them are older and larger than the system of which I have been speaking. I would drop only such as distinctly imply a theory we cannot honestly hold. So much seems to me to be demanded by clear thought and perfect sincerity. But all that are vital, that are human, that belong to the permanent in religion, these I would keep and cherish. Indeed, a larger, grander ritual may rightly be ours in the years to come. But let it be vital, and grow out of permanent religious needs.

These, then, only as hints as to the attitude we are called on to assume by the grander facts of the greater revelation of God. I cannot help thinking that not only is "liberal" Orthodoxy a nondescript that has no place in clear thought, but that much that rejoices in the name Unitarian has not quite squarely faced the truth of the modern world.

> "But now the past is out of date,
> The future not yet born,"

sings Matthew Arnold. I suppose it is inevitable that the world should pass through these phases. There must be twilight between night and morning. As there is no end of "legal fiction," as Sir Henry Maine calls it, by means of which old formulas are stretched to cover legal cases that the old law-makers never had in mind, so perhaps we cannot escape that theological fiction that interprets into old forms and phrases a thousand things they were never meant to include. But, as fast as we can, ought we not to regard the grand sincerity of Jesus, and put our "new wine into new bottles"? We have everything to gain and nothing to lose by making our work so clear and explicit that it shall call to itself the clear heads and earnest hearts of the world. As our loved Unitarian poet sings,—

"Be ours to mark with hearts unchilled
The change an outworn age deplores;
The legend sinks, but faith shall build
A fairer throne on new-found shores."

On considering this point, of our squarely facing the future and coming frankly and bravely out into the new universe, with one of our own members the other day, he expressed the opinion that the great thing that stood in our way was not any question of accepting the past again, but the more important one of confidence in the future. He thought a great multitude of liberals, even large numbers of the ministers, have so little confidence in a permanent basis for practical religion that this accounts for the backward look or the pause of hesitation. He thought a greater service than making clear our attitude toward the past would be a setting forth of adequate grounds for trust in the coming. But to do this would call for at least another essay.

For myself, a distrust of the future, of its being safe to hear the call that bids us go on, is the only infidelity I fear. There is nothing to be gained by going back, even if a clear-headed and honest man could go. If there be no God in the future, then there certainly is none in the past. For one, I am convinced that we are on the eve of a grander renaissance of faith than the

world has ever known. And, this time, it is to be a faith in "a city that hath foundations." If it took two centuries for the popular mind to readjust itself to the physical change from the Ptolemaic to the Copernican universe, let us not think it strange if it takes time for us to go through the present unspeakably vaster revolution. But let no one who believes in God hesitate when the command is heard, "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." In any case, however we feel, or whether we rise to the occasion or not, the new knowledge of the universe is here, the new knowledge of God is here, the new knowledge of man's relation to God is here, the new knowledge as to what needs to be done to better that relation is here. And the task assigned to the Church is to assist in bringing about that better relation.

THE CHURCH OF TO-DAY.

We are living in a time when the Church is losing its grip on the brain and conscience as well as the heart and reverence of the great world. The older branch of the Church commands only a traditional and perfunctory respect in those countries where once it dominated in the field of practical conduct as well as the airy regions of what is called "faith." Nor in Protestant lands is it much better. It is a by-

word that the strength of the churches is in the women and the children, and no longer in the men. It is well known that business or social reasons, a love for fine music or vigorous oratory, have more to do with the attendance of the men who do go than any conviction that the churches represent the supreme truth or stand for the supreme needs of strong men. All sorts of devices are resorted to in order to get people to church; and neither the average minister nor the average parishioner has any real belief that it is at all necessary to his soul's "salvation." It is only, in some indefinite way, "a good thing."

All the efforts to help matters out by softening a disagreeable doctrine or enriching the service by an elaboration of the ritual, all the superficial plastering of weak spots or patching of ecclesiastical robes, seem to me most pathetic confessions that the real life and the great purpose are gone. Was it any of these sorts of things that conquered the Roman Empire, climbed on the throne of the Cæsars, subdued and reshaped barbaric peoples, faced the lions in the arena, and went to heaven with a song on hissing wings of flame? Did Paul seek an audience by advertising a new tenor or by any display of robes or ritual? Decorate your life if you will, but get your life first. No decoration can revive a corpse. Like

a dressed up and bejewelled *bambino*, it only makes it ghastly.

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ment, the love, the reverence, that so fitly attach themselves to his name, there still linger on, in our ecclesiastical usage, ideas, forms, phrases, assumptions, that do not fit into the universe as we know it, and that seem to me to hinder clear conceptions of our real situation and vital work. I refer to a few of these with much hesitation; for I am aware that not only older, but better men will differ from me. Still, I must be true to what seems to me the logic of our situation.

1. However lofty the niche we assign to Jesus, and however glorious his work, still he is not, in any intelligently accepted sense of the words to-day, either our "Saviour" or our "Redeemer." Jesus never used them of himself; and they belong to a system of theological thought that not only we no longer believe, but which is squarely in the way of what we do believe. The English tongue is capable of clearly expressing the deepest and highest truth we are ever likely to grasp; and a new form of words that is true is more sacred than any old form that conveys a meaning that contradicts our faith. Since we do not believe that man is "lost," the words that not only imply the false position, but obscure the true one, ought to be avoided. If we say we mean that man is lost, in the sense that he is out of the right road, then two things: first, we

Associa-
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know that that is not what people understand us to mean by the word; and, secondly, it follows that not Jesus only, but all those who help men to find the way, are saviours.

2. Then ought we any longer to close our prayers with the words, "for Christ's sake," or those of similar import? An Oriental sultan may choose his favorite for prime minister, and, while refusing petitions on the ground of mercy or justice, may grant them for his favorite's sake. But do we still so think of God? And does not that whole conception of prayer even pass away with the old universe of which it was a natural enough part? I cannot help thinking it an imputation against the character of God and Jesus both. The whole orthodox picture of Jesus as interceding in heaven, and of God as being prevailed on so to be kindly and good,—is it not repulsive to our sense of mercy and justice both? Had it not better die with the theory to which it belongs?

3. And along with these shall we not leave behind us the whole scheme of Messianism, and all that goes with it? To us Jesus is not the "Messiah" in the Jewish sense. He is not the "Messiah" in any historic Christian sense. Do we still look for his "coming" in any sense that justifies our clinging to any of the fragments of the

worn-out theory? That whole idea belonged to the other universe, not to the one we are living in.

4. Having given up the infallibility of all books, shall we not have also to give up the infallibility of all men? The record is hopelessly confused and contradictory. If Jesus is infallible, whose Jesus, which Jesus? The Jesus of the last of Mark is not the Jesus of the parable of the Prodigal Son.

At the dedication of Unity Church in Chicago after the fire, I was to read the Scripture lesson. As our good Dr. Furness was to preach, I asked him what I should read. Having selected a chapter of John, he ran his finger down the page, and, pointing out a certain verse, said, "Don't read that: Jesus never said that." But, as its sentiment was quite in accord with much attributed to him, I could not see why he "never said that," except that Dr. Furness could not bear to think that his Jesus entertained any such feeling. But have we a right to pick and choose, and so make a Jesus "in our likeness"? If so, is it not our own infallibility we are believing in, and not that of Jesus at all?

5. Have we any better right to think of any man that ever lived as perfect? Old Father Taylor was once asked if he thought anybody else had ever lived as good as

Jesus; and he replied,—orthodox as he was, —"Yes, thousands of them." In the sense in which he meant it, perhaps thousands have been "perfect." But, beyond the fact that we actually know so little about the daily personal life of Jesus, it seems to me incongruous to think of any person as either infallible or perfect, when we think of all men alike as groping their way along the dimly lighted pathway of an infinite universe. Such ideas belonged to the old universe: they do not belong to the new. I would by no means be understood as wishing to sweep away all the forms, rites, symbols, rituals, and phrases that are saturated with the religious spirit and consecrated as vehicles of religious life by centuries of sacred association. The most of these, indeed, are human, and belong to all reverent souls. Most of them are older and larger than the system of which I have been speaking. I would drop only such as distinctly imply a theory we cannot honestly hold. So much seems to me to be demanded by clear thought and perfect sincerity. But all that are vital, that are human, that belong to the permanent in religion, these I would keep and cherish. Indeed, a larger, grander ritual may rightly be ours in the years to come. But let it be vital, and grow out of permanent religious needs.

These, then, only as hints as to the attitude we are called on to assume by the grander facts of the greater revelation of God. I cannot help thinking that not only is "liberal" Orthodoxy a nondescript that has no place in clear thought, but that much that rejoices in the name Unitarian has not quite squarely faced the truth of the modern world.

> "But now the past is out of date,
> The future not yet born,"

sings Matthew Arnold. I suppose it is inevitable that the world should pass through these phases. There must be twilight between night and morning. As there is no end of "legal fiction," as Sir Henry Maine calls it, by means of which old formulas are stretched to cover legal cases that the old law-makers never had in mind, so perhaps we cannot escape that theological fiction that interprets into old forms and phrases a thousand things they were never meant to include. But, as fast as we can, ought we not to regard the grand sincerity of Jesus, and put our "new wine into new bottles"? We have everything to gain and nothing to lose by making our work so clear and explicit that it shall call to itself the clear heads and earnest hearts of the world. As our loved Unitarian poet sings,—

"Be ours to mark with hearts unchilled
The change an outworn age deplores;
The legend sinks, but faith shall build
A fairer throne on new-found shores."

On considering this point, of our squarely facing the future and coming frankly and bravely out into the new universe, with one of our own members the other day, he expressed the opinion that the great thing that stood in our way was not any question of accepting the past again, but the more important one of confidence in the future. He thought a great multitude of liberals, even large numbers of the ministers, have so little confidence in a permanent basis for practical religion that this accounts for the backward look or the pause of hesitation. He thought a greater service than making clear our attitude toward the past would be a setting forth of adequate grounds for trust in the coming. But to do this would call for at least another essay.

For myself, a distrust of the future, of its being safe to hear the call that bids us go on, is the only infidelity I fear. There is nothing to be gained by going back, even if a clear-headed and honest man could go. If there be no God in the future, then there certainly is none in the past. For one, I am convinced that we are on the eve of a grander renaissance of faith than the

world has ever known. And, this time, it is to be a faith in "a city that hath foundations." If it took two centuries for the popular mind to readjust itself to the physical change from the Ptolemaic to the Copernican universe, let us not think it strange if it takes time for us to go through the present unspeakably vaster revolution. But let no one who believes in God hesitate when the command is heard, "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." In any case, however we feel, or whether we rise to the occasion or not, the new knowledge of the universe is here, the new knowledge of God is here, the new knowledge of man's relation to God is here, the new knowledge as to what needs to be done to better that relation is here. And the task assigned to the Church is to assist in bringing about that better relation.

THE CHURCH OF TO-DAY.

We are living in a time when the Church is losing its grip on the brain and conscience as well as the heart and reverence of the great world. The older branch of the Church commands only a traditional and perfunctory respect in those countries where once it dominated in the field of practical conduct as well as the airy regions of what is called "faith." Nor in Protestant lands is it much better. It is a by-

word that the strength of the churches is in the women and the children, and no longer in the men. It is well known that business or social reasons, a love for fine music or vigorous oratory, have more to do with the attendance of the men who do go than any conviction that the churches represent the supreme truth or stand for the supreme needs of strong men. All sorts of devices are resorted to in order to get people to church; and neither the average minister nor the average parishioner has any real belief that it is at all necessary to his soul's "salvation." It is only, in some indefinite way, "a good thing."

All the efforts to help matters out by softening a disagreeable doctrine or enriching the service by an elaboration of the ritual, all the superficial plastering of weak spots or patching of ecclesiastical robes, seem to me most pathetic confessions that the real life and the great purpose are gone. Was it any of these sorts of things that conquered the Roman Empire, climbed on the throne of the Cæsars, subdued and reshaped barbaric peoples, faced the lions in the arena, and went to heaven with a song on hissing wings of flame? Did Paul seek an audience by advertising a new tenor or by any display of robes or ritual? Decorate your life if you will, but get your life first. No decoration can revive a corpse. Like

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must make itself large enough to match the real universe once more. It must tower domelike above the loftiest intellect; it must overawe the grandest conscience; it must include the largest heart; it must guide the practical life; it must hold out the loftiest hopes to man.

I fully believe—because I believe in God—that, when we have fully entered into and made ourselves at home in the modern universe, when we have grasped its religious and ethical import, we shall see the grandest Church that the world has ever known. The most that science can do is to help us see our way. The most that art can do is to decorate and beautify our house of life. The most that music can do is to give wordless voice to the unutterable emotions and aspirations of the soul. The most that literature can do is to cultivate our taste and furnish us resting-places along the pathway of life. But the Church, if true to her mission, is the minister of God in creating life. The Church should make manhood and womanhood. All other things only serve them after they are made. As in the Middle Age the Church was the universal patron, and made all things else her servants, so shall it be once more. Let the Church but grasp the great and divine truths that God has laid ready to her hand, and once again may she say to all men: "Come unto

me, for I hold the keys of the secret of life. Come unto me, and learn what kind of a world you live in, what kind of God rules this world, how you stand related to him, and how you may get into better relations! Here, in the knowledge of the real God, is the secret of all physical life, of all mental life, of all moral life, of all spiritual life. Here, in the knowledge of the real God, is the key to the solution of all social, all economic problems, to all prosperity, to all happiness. To whom also but unto me can you go, for I speak the words of eternal life!"

The Church is either this, or it is nothing. It must be this, or else, like a Middle Age castle, become only a moss-grown ruin, an interesting relic of a bygone time. But it must become this; if not in our hands, then in some other. For it takes only a definition of religion to show it to be of the immortals. So long as the universe lasts, and there is a man in it capable of feeling and thinking about the relation in which he stands to it, so long religion must endure. And the call of God now is to us to become the exponents of a religion in keeping with his latest revelation. Ours are the principles, of intellectual freedom and growth, that fit us for the task. We have a "gospel" to preach: the older churches have not. For, were their doctrine true, it ought to be ac-

cepted with bowed heads and burdened hearts. But ours is indeed the glad tidings of God.

Let us, then, look up and catch the inspiration of the coming day. Let us build a house of all peoples, fronting every quarter of the heavens and whose gates shall not be shut at all.

O church of our ideal,
  The human, the divine,
With what a peerless lustre
  Thy haunting towers shine!
Thou drawest our souls to thee
  As draws our eyes a star;
And still we follow after
  Where thou dost lead afar!

Thy walls sink deep, firm grounded
  Within the soul of man,
Who ever seeks to copy
  Thy one eternal plan.
Our faulty work may crumble
  And be the scorn of men,
But still, with new endeavor,
  We'll rise and build again!

The trusts of all past ages
  Have gone into thy walls:
The hope of ages coming
  For thy completion calls.
By all that's grandly human,
  By all that is divine,
In living and in dying,
  Our hearts, our souls, are thine!

Within thy sacred portals
  There comes to us the trust
That, though our bodies perish,
  A man is more than dust.
Still upward, upward climbing,
  Beneath thy starry dome,
We see, high o'er the darkness,
  Shine out the soul's true home!

The one age-long search of man, then, is the search for the secret of life. The changes and readaptations are necessary stages of growth. Nothing is lost; for all partial truths are taken up into the completer statements. The world is not old, and hastening to decay. Humanity, like young Hercules, has only strangled a few serpents in its cradle. Its labors and conquests are still ahead. So, while others talk of the night's coming, "in which no man can work," we will answer the question as to what o'clock it is in religion, that it is only morning. The great day of God and man is before us; and its light shall but be merged into the glory of that country of which it is said, "Thy sun shall no more go down."

[No. 19]

A STATEMENT OF BELIEF

ADOPTED BY THE NEW-HAMPSHIRE UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

WE BELIEVE

(1) In One God, the Heavenly Father, all-wise, holy, just and good.

Him alone we worship, (Matt. vi., 9; John iv., 23; Eph. iii., 14; iv., 6,) not Christ, nor Mary.

He is the ever-present spirit, in whom all things exist. (Acts xvii., 28.)

The Christian idea of God's character, government and ways is suggested by a wise and loving human fatherhood. (See 5 and 6.) (Luke xi., 11, 13; Deut. viii, 5.) The Divine fatherhood is *universal*, reaching out to the wandering and prodigal, (Luke xv., 3–32,) and caring for every soul, (Luke xv., 4,) in every and and race. (Jonah iv., 11; 1 Tim. ii., 4.)

(2) In Jesus Christ, the well-beloved Son of God.

He is *the* Son, the highest manifestation of the filial spirit in religion, (Gal. iv., 6, 7,) and of the holy character, in which true sonship to God consists. (John x., 36; Rom. viii., 14, 29; Heb. ii., 10, 11, Rev. xxi., 7.)

In the New Testament he is always represented as *subordinate* to God, (1 Cor. xv., 28; Phil. ii., 11; see also John xvii., 3; 1 Cor. viii., 6; Heb. xii., 23, 24,) but as having the Spirit of God without measure. (John iii., 34; Acts x., 38; Col. ii., 9, compare Eph. iii., 19.)

"God was in Christ," (2 Cor. v., 19,) but Christ was not God.

(3) In the Holy Spirit, the Presence and Power of God in the Soul and Life.

It is "the spirit of God," (that is, *God himself* as present in the soul,) corresponding to "the spirit of man," (that is, man himself.) (See 1 Cor. ii., 10, 11.)

The Divine Spirit is *with and in all souls*, (see 10) (Ps cxxxix., 7; Job xxxii., 8; John ., 9;) manifested in the voice of conscience and in all goodness, and especially in the religious life. — In its highest manifestations it is called in Scripture the Holy Spirit.

(4) In Human Nature, as not ruined but incomplete.

Man is not fallen from a primitive state of holiness, but is *imperfectly developed*. (1 Cor. xv., 46, 47.) Being imperfect he is liable to sin; as a moral agent he is responsible for sinning. The essence of sin is the failure of the higher nature of man to rule his lower nature. (Rom. viii., 13.)

Men often inherit both the good and the evil traits and tendencies of their ancestors; but they can not inherit guilt. (Matt. xviii., 10; xix., 14.)

Human Nature is made sacred by the indwelling presence of God.

Humanity is not tending downward, but is Divinely guided from lower to higher forms of moral and spiritual life.

(5) In the CERTAINTY OF RETRIBUTION, as not to be evaded nor transferred.

No sin can escape punishment. (Rom. ii., 6; Col. iii., 25.) "The *way* of trangressors is hard," (Prov. xiii., 15,) not merely the final results of sin. The terrible degradation and suffering that sooner or later follow wilful transgression, either here or hereafter, are the real "hell."

While the consequences of the good or evil conduct of one are often shared by many, (Rom. v., 19, 21,) demerit and penalty, like merit and reward, are strictly personal and untransferable. (Ezek. xviii., 20.)

Penalty is not arbitrary, but is involved in transgression and follows *naturally* from it in accordance with Divine laws. (Gal. vi., 7.) God is everywhere and constantly acting through natural law.

(6) In the BENEFICENT PURPOSE of all divine penalties, as disciplinary and remedial.

The object of these penalties is not merely to "vindicate law," but also to correct wrong tendencies, to discipline and to save.

Retributive suffering becomes remedial when it arouses the Conscience to a deeper sense of the guilt of wilful transgression. It thus prepares the Soul to be touched by the Divine Love, and awakened to a higher life, or "regenerated." (Deut. viii., 5; Ezek. xviii., 23, 32; Rom. ii., 4.)

The Justice and the Mercy of God are harmonious and inseparable.

(7) In REPENTANCE AND FAITH, as the only conditions of Divine Forgiveness.

The ATONEMENT, in the New Testament use of the word, is simply the *reconciliation of man to God.* (Rom. v., 10, 11; 2 Cor. v., 19; Eph. ii., 16.)—It does not mean that Christ suffered as a substitute for us, to obtain for us Divine forgiveness. Such substituted expiation is morally impossible, because neither merits nor penalties can be transferred; and it would be needless, because God has always been ready to forgive the sincerely penitent, in the only sense in which forgiveness is possible. (Luke xv., 20; Ezek. xviii., 21—23.)—"Atone" originally meant, not to expiate, but to "make at one" or reconcile. (Acts vii., 26.)

Forgiveness removes the sense of estrangement from God, *but does not immediately remit any other penalty.* All other consequences of transgression continue (see 5), though sometimes modified by repentance.

Conversion is the Soul's turning to God in repentance and faith.

FAITH, in this religious sense, is different from Belief. It is loyalty and trust. It is self-surrender to God's righteousness and love, or *religious self-consecration.*—Belief is expressed in doctrine; Faith, in character and life.

Faith in Christ is discipleship to him, expressed in loyalty to his spirit and life. (Matt. xviii., 6.) In another aspect it is self-surrender to the holiness and fatherly love of God, as revealed in the teachings and life of Jesus. (Acts xvi., 31; Gal. iii., 26.)

(8) In SALVATION, as moral and spiritual Health.

Salvation is not a deliverance from the *penalties* of wrong-doing, either here or hereafter, except as these penalties may be modified by the new spiritual life. It is deliverance from the power of sin, rather than from its punishment. It is living in a present heaven of love and duty, rather than escaping into a place of safety hereafter.

Salvation, in the highest sense, is the development and final perfecting of *character*. — Right character is not a mere "condition" of future salvation. It is *itself salvation* here and now. (Phil. ii., 12; Heb. ii., 10.)

Jesus becomes our Saviour, not by having suffered the penalties of our sins in our stead, but by awakening in us a new spiritual life. (Matt. i., 21; John x., 10; Acts iii., 26; Rom. vi., 4, 11, 23; viii., 2; xi., 26, 27; Col. ii., 13.)

"The Kingdom of God" or "of Heaven" is the Reign of God *here and now*, as well as hereafter; the divine or heavenly state of things in human society and in the individual life. (Matt. iii., 2; x., 7; Luke xvii., 20, 21; Rom. xiv., 17; Rev. xii., 10.)

(9) In the CHRISTIANITY of Christ, as a spirit and life rather than as a system of speculative doctrine.

Christianity is better expressed in *character* than in creed. — The important question is not so much What do we think about Christ? as, How much of his spirit have we? (Matt. xii., 32; Rom. viii., 9; 1 Cor. xii., 12, 13.) — The true Confession of Christ is made in life, not in profession. (Matt. vii., 21; 1 Cor. iv., 20.) — The real Denial of Christ is faithlessness to his spirit and life. (2 Peter i., 1; compare 12-21.)

Infidelity, or Unbelief as a sin, is not disbelief in doctrine, but faithlessness to the Christly spirit and life. (2 Cor. vi., 14, 15, compare vii., 1; Luke xii., 46, compare "hypocrites" in Matt. xxiv., 51; Rev. xxi., 8; Phil. iii., 18, 19.)

Right beliefs are important in various degrees; but Belief (Luke i., 1,) is an involuntary mental act, in which we are not responsible for anything but sincerity and diligence in seeking the truth; Faith is a *voluntary moral act and state*, and is therefore a duty. (See definition of Faith, page 2.) (Matt. vi., 30; Acts vi., 5; Rom. iv., 12; 1 Cor. xiii., 13; Eph. iv., 13; vi., 16; 1 Tim. v., 8; vi., 12. For the use of "believe" in the sense of "have faith," see Mark v., 36; Rom. iv., 3.)

Religion is loyalty to God, manifested in reverence for truth and goodness and in righteousness of life.

That the religious spirit and life are more important than any forms, is the doctrine of Spiritual Religion. (John iv., 23; Rom. xiv., 5-18; Gal. v., 1, 2, 6; Col. ii., 16.) But forms are helpful and important. — The true Church of Christ consists of all who are trying to be Christ-like. (Rom. xiv., 17, 18; Eph. vi., 24.)

(10) In INSPIRATION, as universal, a Divine illumination in all souls, and an impulse and guidance toward truth and goodness.

Inspiration is needed in every soul to interpret and verify the teachings of those who are inspired in a higher degree. (See 11.) — According to its degree inspiration confers authority, but *not necessarily infallibility*.

The Bible is not all equally authoritative; some parts are not at all authoritative. (Matt. v., 38, 39, 43, 44) — "The word of God," in the Scriptural use of the phrase, means *never the Bible as a whole, nor the mere letter of a text*. But any moral or spiritual truth, (Luke iv., 4; John x., 35,) especially Christian truth, (Luke viii., 11; Acts iv., 31; Eph. vi., 17,) or any Divine command, (Luke iii., 2,) or promise, (Rom. ix., 6,) whether found in Scripture or given elsewhere, (Mark vii., 13,) is in Scripture called God's word.

(11) In the FINAL AUTHORITY of the testimony of God in our own Reason, Conscience and Soul.

This involves the right and duty of individual judgment, under a responsibility to God alone. (Rom. xiv., 4, 5.) — It also forbids belief in any doctrine that is clearly seen to be *irrational, immoral* or *irreligious*. (Luke xii., 57; 1 Cor. ii., 15.)

The truth contained in Scripture must be verified by *our own moral and religious insight*, which is "the witness of the Spirit." (Job xxxii., 8; Matt. xvi., 17; 1 Cor. ii., 10, 12, 15; 2 Cor. iv., 6.)

The Bible exhibits the main *historical sources* of Christian beliefs; but the *final reason* for holding these beliefs must be found in the approval of them by our own moral and spiritual nature as awakened and enlightened by Faith (John vii., 17) and guided by the Spirit of God. (John xvi., 13.)

(12) In IMMORTALITY, as the Future Life of Divine discipline and endless progress.

There is no reason to suppose that death either causes the remission of penalties, or shuts out opportunities of repentance. The mercy of God is everlasting to all. (Ps. cxlv., 8, 9; Micah vii., 18; Luke vi., 35, 36.) — Unitarians generally believe in the final reconciliation and salvation of all souls. (Eph. i., 10; Phil. ii., 10, 11; Col. i., 20.) A few believe in a final extinction of life in the incorrigible. None believe in the endless suffering of any soul.

NOTE. This Statement of Belief was unanimously adopted by the N. H. Unitarian Association, at Concord, Oct. 30, 1878,—not as a creed in the sense of a limit of inquiry or a test of fellowship,—but as an affirmation of the *most distinctive* views that are now generally held by Unitarians.

Sent gratuitously on application to the Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

[No. 20]

THE BRIGHT SIDE OUT.

BY

REV. CHARLES F. DOLE.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

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FORM OF BEQUEST.

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THE BRIGHT SIDE OUT.

He maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good. — MATT v. 45.

AMONG the mysteries that no knowledge is able to solve is the shining of the sun. It shines on with equal heat to-day as in the ages of our fathers. What is the nature of its mighty heat? What feeds its fires? Why does it not cool or fade? The sun is the great, visible symbol of constancy. We turn away from it, we move farther off, we put up our little veils of vapor to shut out its light; but the sun remains constant, pouring out its inexhaustible warmth and light in the face of far-off worlds and into empty space. So says Jesus of the unchanging and infinite Goodness. We are accustomed to hear God called the unchangeable in prayers and liturgies: thereby, God is often made to seem farther away. Jesus is not here speaking to praise God, but to teach men. See, he says, God's constant love! Why? To worship it? No, to imitate it. Be God's children, he says, by being constant as he is. This is the summit of the Ser-

mon on the Mount. Two or three sentences here, if you understand them, are the key to everything which Jesus taught.

Most men have two sides which they alternately turn to you. There is a good side, which they turn at will upon their friends, as a revolving light-house throws its rays toward a passing ship. "Ah!" you say, as the blaze flashes over the water, "we had thought that there were only ugly rocks there." There is a bad or seamy side in men's natures. It is as if there were two different men, or as though each man had a double, not like himself, but as unlike as possible, behind the same features. To-day, the good man is outside, and turns a serious, friendly face upon you. This is the man who meets you in company, who bows his head in church, whom his children love, who does quiet kindnesses to the poor; a very good neighbor, if you have need of him. You would like him wholly, if it were not for his double. The double does and says exasperating things. He is sharp, greedy, and stingy. He is narrow, unsocial, fretful, a pessimist by nature. Which of these men will you find, when you call upon your friend? No one knows. You may find the one going out and the other coming in. You may be interrupted in the midst of your conversation by the double whom you had not expected.

Of course, only the good man lives in the inner and sacred places of the home, the bad double being a sort of servant to do the ruder business and to

guard the privacy of the soul. No: the two men change places at intervals inside a man's home, and before wife and children. The better man does not rise sometimes in the morning, but the baser double, who has to be adroitly managed to get along with him.

Some one says that this man with two sides or personalities must be a hypocrite. This is just what he is not. He shows out precisely what he is. On his good side, he is everything that he seems to be; what he says he means. A hypocrite acts a part, professes what he does not mean, wears a friendly face or uses a cordial tone when inwardly he wishes you out of his sight. A hypocrite tries to wear a mask and conceal the worst side.

There are a few people who have no vexatious double to perplex or alienate us, whose simple, constant nature is our wonder. But most of us are conscious of the two almost distinct sides or selves. We hardly know which is real, the better or the worse self. Times of abject humiliation come, when we could honestly say, if this worse side were all, that there was "no health in us." On the bad side, as far as that goes, one man seems to be as bad as another. The respectable man on his bad side has no advantage over the base man. The acts which he then does, the words which he speaks, are as mean and dastardly as any one's acts and words are. Passion, stinginess, jealousy, in no wise change their character because the man has a good side with

which they are inconsistent. The Old Testament stories of Jacob and David are typical stories of men who, having a good side and also a bad side, are the more detestable when they turn their bad side to the world.

We call a man good, according to the constancy with which he turns his better side to us. A bad man is not one who has no good side, but whose good side is inconstant. The bad side is something more than the mere absence of light. It is positively hurtful, as though a planet on one side cast life-giving rays, but, turning its other side, cast rays that pained and killed. So there is a double power toward life and death that every man carries about. Turning one side, he does every one good: turning the other side, he hurts you.

What is it commonly that makes a man give you his good side? It is that you give him first your good side. There is a principle of reflection back and forth between you, each drawing on the good in the other and giving it back. You naturally do good to those who do good to you. There are wholesome, cordial natures who draw out the best there is in you. You can no more turn the bad side to them than a mirror held to the light can help reflecting it back again. The rule seems to be fair and natural to do good to those who do good to you, or, in other words, Whatever men do unto you, good or bad, do ye even so to them. This is the law of the material world, in which each inani-

mate thing answers back in kind, — light to light, color to color, sound to the blow struck upon it, — action and reaction being equal. This is the way children behave, who reflect back whatever you do to them and the influences around them. This was the early idea about God, as in the terrible verses, "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful, and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward;" as though the Eternal also, like a man, had two sides, one good and the other cruel and jealous.

Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is laboring to show the secret of a higher law. It had already dawned upon the world, but it wanted enforcement. Whereas before men had been permitted to live on their bad side as often as they had to meet the bad, whereas before men could be good to their friends and bad to their enemies, revolving from one side to the other as circumstances ordered, now Jesus said, Men must present their good side to every one. It is here that the famous passage comes, "Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." It seems the climax of extravagance. It is a metaphor to illustrate the larger spiritual law. It is as though Jesus said, When a man turns to you his bad or hurtful side, do you still turn to him your good and beneficent side.

Our conscience answers to this larger law. Be you however passionate or revengeful, no man

could treat you so ill as to warrant your turning your bad side on him. He might be a criminal, and you an officer sent to arrest him, he might be a rebel in arms, and you a soldier fighting for your country, but you need never be anything else toward him than your best self, — true, just, magnanimous, friendly. A certain divine dignity rises in you to condemn your demeaning yourself to the nature of the bad by showing yourself bad. Shall the sun cease to shine because men do evil beneath it? Shall God cease to be beneficent? Shall a man, who has caught the secret of the beneficent working of God, cease from his beneficence because another is evil, or because no one thanks or rewards him?

This rule opens into every realm of man's life. Does some one say, "I must answer back in the dealings of trade, and match the methods of people about me"? The rule says that you shall show your truthful and just side, though every man about you be false. Would you not debase yourself to turn on men a false side, who had once turned on them your true and divine side; to begin to reflect the rays that hurt and kill, who had it in you to throw the unceasing rays that save and help?

Hear what one, whom men have called a heathen, on whom the eternal light undoubtedly shone, said about this: "A man should use himself to think of those things only about which, if one should suddenly ask, 'What hast thou now in thy thoughts?' with perfect openness thou mightest immediately answer

this or that; so that from thy words it should be plain that everything in thee is simple and benevolent, and one that cares not for . . . any rivalry or envy and suspicion, or anything else for which thou wouldest blush, if thou shouldest say that thou hadst it in thy mind."

This is plainer, if possible, when you think of the relations in which we stand as husbands and wives, mothers and sisters and children. There is a subtle kind of hypocrisy by which men turn their good side to neighbors, customers, and strangers, make themselves agreeable, show themselves friendly, do favors, and speak genial words, who at home rest themselves, as it were, from the strain of their good behavior, and turn the other and baser side to those whom they ought to treat best. They excuse themselves, from the heathen point of view. They reflect, they say, what they find at home. The temper within is not sunny and cheerful, as they have a right to expect. There are fretful children and jaded housekeepers. Why should not each one reflect what he gets, — love and cheerfulness when they shine, but not otherwise? This is what the barbarous nature in us instinctively says, "Do as others do." And here comes the beautiful law of constancy, clear, simple, authoritative, as if an angel said it. You have no right, it says, to answer back what others give, but only what is best in you. Shall we say to those we love words less courteous and friendly than we should say to a stranger?

Shall we wear a face before our children for their untutored minds to catch and reflect in turn that we should not dare to show upon the street, or express our mean impatience at trifles in the tone that the cynic uses wherewith to sneer?

It is said that it is not human to live upon the friendly side. It is precisely the most human thing to do. Doing this, one most completely and joyfully lives the life of a man. It is easy enough to keep the good side turned, while love is fresh, and we dare not, on peril of losing it, show the mean self to one whose best opinion we crave. Surely, our love is not less after the ties and cares of years have cemented it and priceless responsibilities have bound us fast. It is the interference of the bad self that wearies us. One word that the bad self says jars and tires us more than an hour of work. A room full of impatient children cannot break us down while we hold the firm, tolerant, cheerful temper toward them. Catch the secret of holding the good self toward the blows and brunt of the world, and you have established a safeguard against nervous prostration and invalidism.

The bad self, you answer, is there. How can one help it, if he shows himself? You cannot help his existence, but you hold the veto power over him. You shall not let him speak a word or do an act. You shall bind and muzzle him. Fretfulness never spoke except for harm. Where was a child ever helped by your showing yourself ill-natured? How

dare you let your bad self, that deserves to be punished, strike or punish a child? Or when was the sunny atmosphere brought back to a home by your complaining of the want of it? There is a method, unfailing and restful, by which the bad self can be, by and by, suppressed and effaced. Turn your better self on the home. Answer no unjust word with taunt or reproach, but only with friendly, large-hearted tolerance. Answer back no fretful child in kind, but control and win him with serene and firm good temper. Is there gloom in the house? One soul, turning her better self on the inmates, can flood it with sunshine. Was it "the other's fault" that your home is not happy? No: it is your fault. One tolerant, sunny-tempered, constant soul in a house can do everything.

Some one says, "I am not good enough." Your good self is good enough. When you are friendly, magnanimous, helpful, no one wants more than that of you. Be what you are when your good self speaks, and it is all that your home asks. All homage, obedience, devotion, and love that you need shall go to your good self. It is no immodesty to praise your good self. It is God's nature in you.

The good self is only there, you say, when some one else shows goodness to bring it out. A shame on us, then, if we only love our friends after they have begun to love us! A shame on us, if we will do nothing to serve, to help, to comfort our house-

hold, except on the ignoble condition of equivalents! A shame on us, if we will not begin to throw light, and keep on throwing light, as long as any one needs to be lighted! This is the precise point to which we are speaking. We have nothing to do in this world except to maintain the good self shining, summer and winter, night and day, like God's sun.

The home is the type of all social relations, as all mankind, truly considered, is a larger family. The old heathen idea holds place that socially one may have two sides, — a genial side and a side of reserve and coldness, alternately to show to friends or to strangers. It is the old story, "We will love those who love us." It is the reciprocal action, back and forth, between those who belong in the same set, as of the light reflected between mirrors around the walls of a single room. The room is bright, but no one outside is lighter for it. We see people daily meet each other in society. How careful they are not to go more than half way, — to gauge their conduct, their manners, their measure of respect by the standard of what they get! They do as people do to them, not as they would be done by. No increase of God's life comes in this way. It is not by reciprocity of what others do, but by overplus beyond what others do or can return.

Jesus once gave his disciples a lesson about this. He noticed that they made their feasts and showed their attentions within exclusive sets. They thought

to pay back in kind to those who had loved them. He told them that this was not enough. Not a soul more got love by this merely reciprocal action among the people of a set. You must break over your exclusive sets, he said. You must call in those who had not invited you, and could not invite you in turn. You must start new circles of beneficent influences where there were none.

Every one knows something of the almost electric surprise of this kind of greeting. We who are not specially touched by receiving our dues from our neighbors, the proper courtesy, the decent consideration, the payment of an obligation, — whatever we take as our right, — have been thrilled at receiving what we did not deserve: courtesy, as if to an equal, from our elders; thoughtfulness, as to a friend, from strangers; a smile, a word, a recognition of our common humanity, a helping hand, coming as if from heaven. The unexpected generosity, the love to which we were not entitled, shining out on our lonely way and lighting the dark corners of our hearts, — these are the influences that have made us better. Who would not delight to carry this kind of influence?

We are not establishing an impossible ideal, or asking that you should love every one alike. It is quite possible to turn our friendly side constantly on men. Our manner should say to the stranger, "We believe that God's nature is in you. Show it to us." Our attitude should say, even to enemies,

"We wish you good, and not harm. We would be friends, if you permit." This is not loving people alike, though it is readiness to love them as much as in us lies.

There are three ways in which bodies behave as regards the light. There is a kind of surface which is mostly absorbent, and destroys light; there is a surface which reflects whatever it gets; there are also bodies which catch fire, and produce light in turn. No one needs to be taught against being a dark surface, to absorb good and turn it to evil. Most men mean to reflect what they get. They intend to do as much as is done for them, as the moon and planets reflect the sunlight that falls on them, being bright on one side and dark on the other side. Christianity contemplates more than this. It aims to make men catch the fire and produce light. Men are of the same nature as the sun, — suns themselves.

This makes the moral law very simple. It is what Paul means when he says that the life of the spirit is above law. You do not have to keep in mind a dry list of moral rules. You do not have to discipline the evil nature in you or be fighting appetites and passions. The good self is naturally just, benevolent, reverent of God and man. We constantly turn that side in word and action, and upon all men alike. The only thing we have to think of is to keep it turned and fixed. The mirror says, "I reflect;" and that is all. The sun says, "I blaze

and shine. I give whether others reflect or not. I keep shining when nothing else shines." That is the idea of Christianity. Little by little the whole mass of the life catches with that kindling. The area of darkness grows smaller. By and by there will be nothing dark.

The idea of sin is simplified. Sin is the turning of the bad self. Whoever turns on a man his worse self instead of the good self sins. It is not so much what he does or says as it is the attitude. We owe each other the best that is in us. Whoever turns away the best, and gives us the low and mean, hurts us, makes our life less, and, so far as in him is, darkens the face of the world. To save a man from sin is to help turn his good self again on the world. Wherever love shines, whoever gives us his best, whoever turns the divine nature upon our view, saves us from sin. Fill the world full of true men, living the life of God's sons, and sin is impossible.

The explanation of Jesus' nature is here. What is it to be the son of God? It is to be one who shines and is beneficent, as God shines and is beneficent. The untaught, heathen, material man does good as good is done to him; and that is all. The spiritual man does good like God, with pure love of good, and without demanding return. Who is it that has seized the idea of casting the utmost possible light, with simple faith in the beneficent, life-giving power of the light? That is, according to Jesus, to be a son of God.

There is a class of men everywhere who can be depended upon to do everything that promises to serve man. You ask no service of them in vain. They are committed to help you carry light and good. They demand no compensation, whatever they receive being incidental to the work of their lives. Their main question is not, Will a thing pay? or Will it bring fame? or Will it be difficult? but Will it do any good? Their ruling principle of helping and carrying good is the same, though men oppose and misunderstand. They recognize no enemies, foreigners, nor inferiors, nor any whom they would not benefit. The ignorant and thriftless, the vicious and injurious, may be assured of their pity. They are cosmopolitan. They are in every profession, making their professional skill the instrument of their purpose. They have their hands on the wheels of government; when they shall rule, wars will stop. They are in every honorable business; they hold wealth as a trust which they do not dare to spend self-indulgently. They are employers where men are to be used as brothers. They are in all trades, making it the delight of their work that they give more than they receive. They are in humble stations which their generous spirit glorifies. They are in thousands of homes, — wives, sisters, mothers, — giving love out of the abundance of their hearts to those who can never requite them. What if they are not loved in return? It is enough if they make the lives of men

brighter. It is their characteristic that they add something of themselves to everything that their hands touch. They pay you your dues, but they add the fragrance of their friendly intent; their thanks are personal words; their greeting conveys warmth.

It is like an order of knights sworn to show forth the love of God while life lasts. While others say, We will enjoy this life; while others say, We will get most out of it; while many say, We will give as good as we receive, they say, We will start good, we will establish new centres of influence, we will add to all that we get, like fruitful land giving back ten, twenty, a hundred fold. This is an ideal, you say, not a fact. It is both. You know such people. The old, bad self occasionally torments and shames them. But the bad self is stripped of authority. In the moments of inspiration, when love blazes up, when pity asserts herself, when the soul sees her visions of the beneficent life, the bad self already disappears.

Prayer now reaches its highest significance. How irrational it once seemed to pray, as though with mechanical words to turn the Eternal! It was because we had only learned the alphabet of prayer. Prayer is now the most rational, natural, and necessary fact. It is the catching of the finite torch from the central flame; it is the turning of the good side of the soul into its fixed place for the day; it is the open vision of the aim of one's life.

Prayer is to say, "What, Lord, wouldst thou have me to do? How shall thy light be made farthest to shine?" It is the new consecration of the soul from hour to hour to the beneficent life. If men and women in this simple and natural way, as the old Persians turned to the face of the sun, so in a spiritual fashion turned to the Eternal for light and love, wherewith to bestow, there would be few weary days or heavy hearts.

This order of men wherever you find them is the Church. They have caught Jesus Christ's idea; what he meant by being a son of God they mean. What wild heresies men have taught, under the name of the Church! You could belong to the Church and not know what the Magna Charta of the Church was or what the Church was for. You could be "in regular standing," and throw the influence of your life against the real Church. Men have called themselves Christians, and lived to absorb the good things of this world, as a pagan might have been ashamed to do. And men wonder that the true Church does not grow faster. Why, the world to this day does not know what you mean when you say "the Church." The world has yet to hear the veritable gospel of the living and beneficent God. The world, that thinks it believes in Christ, the official personage who opens the door of heaven to men who have never caught the meaning of heaven, only begins to believe in the beautiful life of him who opens the

secret of heaven to those who would do the deeds of the sons of God.

And men wonder about the evidences of religion and immortality, and seek far and near, and ransack ancient records and pore over abstruse philosophies, while here within the limits of a few luminous verses lies more evidence of God and the things eternal than a lifetime can elaborate. Do you doubt God? Then take the shining of the sun as your parable; see that your life shines after the same untiring fashion, and the world shall be illuminated with the proof of God. Do you want to believe in immortality? Catch the blaze of the love which a Christ had for men. Be willing to burn to make light and heat, careless what becomes of yourself, so be others are lighted and warmed, and the old word comes true, that losing your life you find it again. Such love is eternal.

In certain despondent hours we ask, "What is the good of our lives, and what are we here for?" How can we help asking this, in the midst of the baffling mysteries that encircle us like mountain walls? How shall we reassure ourselves or make life seem worthy, when disappointments fall, when age creeps on, or friends seem few? There is a manner of life in which it is absolutely good to be here. There are men and women of whom no one says, Why were they here? or What good did they do? We know that their work and their lives are linked with everything that makes the heavens beautiful or

the shining of the light wholesome. Their lives go in harmony with the deeper notes that the universe sings. There is no doubt that it was good for Jesus to have been here, though he died at barely past thirty years, and few knew his worth till afterward. It has been good in like manner to have lived, for nameless men and women, who have made the darkness less and the light more, whose bodies rest to-day in a thousand churchyards, whose souls are with God. Their friends do not ask why they were here or what good was it to live; the treasure that they left is imperishable.

The problems of existence cease to perplex us, when we catch the gospel that these facts carry. Let us likewise turn a friendly, cheerful face on the world, lend our best selves to men, shine with the clear, constant light of a generous love to help and save, not alone those who also shine back into our faces, but mostly where need is: where men are poor, ignorant, or friendless; where cares press on tender hearts; where little children will be hurt if we frown on them, but will bless us forever if, like God's sun, we go shining steadily on. Ah! friends, what an ideal we have of the true Church of God, and the plan of our lives that we pray to work out, fearless of labor or care, fearless of death, gladsome, serene, sunny, beneficent.

[No. 21]

OUR

COMMON CHRISTIANITY

BY

ARTHUR P. STANLEY,

DEAN OF WESTMINSTER.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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OUR COMMON CHRISTIANITY

In the incidental remarks at opening, Dean Stanley said: —

There is such a thing as Christianity common to all the various churches of Christendom. There are common elements in our faith which may be found, if not in the actual practices and doctrines of the several churches, at any rate in the original documents to which they all appeal.

And then continued: —

We are wandering to and fro in the labyrinths of our various churches and sects. What I propose to do is not to compare doctrine with doctrine, or institution with institution, although that might be a very interesting and instructive task, and might, perhaps, lead to the same result. But what I propose to do is to endeavor to penetrate, if possible, behind the forms and doctrines of the outward ordinances of Christendom, and to ask what are the inward principles which give them paramount value; what are the essential supernatural elements of Christianity which are above the assaults of criticism, above the turmoil of the world, because above the level of our ordinary carnal, earthly nature. If we can arrive, in ever so rough and imperfect a measure, at those fundamental principles, we shall then be in a better position to understand what it is that gives a peculiar glory to our common faith.

We will endeavor, then, to answer this question as briefly and as plainly as we can. Let us only observe, first of all, that there are many principles in Christianity which it shares with other religions, and which, therefore, we cannot truly enumerate among its direct results. The unity of God, for example, which is one of the most important of all religious principles, was known to the Jewish people long before the Christian era. It assumed a new form of life; but it was still from Abraham, or at least from Moses, that we first received it. Again, the immortality of the soul was and is a truth which the psalmists in their highest moods had reached, which the Egyptian and Grecian priests and philosophers had accepted. He who was the Light of the world turned, indeed, the full rays of His lamp upon it, and revealed, as you see, its inner meaning; but the principle had already been received, and He illuminated and explained rather than expressly discovered it. But there are some principles which were so little known, or which existed in such feeble rudiments, before Christianity, that practically they were not known at all. Let us, in plain words, try to state what those principles are. Some of them, through the influence of Christianity, have become so familiar to us that we shall, perhaps, be startled to hear them named as among its peculiar products. Some are even now so strange, so little recognized, that it may be almost difficult for us to acknowledge that they are Christian at all.

First, There is the principle of the universal benevolence of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, which is expressed in the words "Father," "Our Father," to believe that the relation of the Supreme Mind to man is that of a father. No doubt the word in relation to the Deity was known before, both in Jewish and heathen times; but it was not manifest, it was not brought to the front of religion as it was by Christianity. In the Old Testament it is used two

or three times; but in the New Testament it is used two hundred times. It is the mode in which the Supreme Ruler is expressed throughout the Gospels. It is the name by which He is called in the form of devotion furnished in the New Testament. The Lord's Prayer, or, as it is called in Latin, the *Pater Noster*, teaches us these two things: That the Supreme Governor of the world, like a father, is careful of his earthly children; and,

Secondly, that there is not only a universal Deity, but a common humanity; in other words, there is something in every race of man which attracts the divine good-will towards them. In the old heathen religions, each country had its own deity, each deity had his own country, — gods of Troy, gods of Greece, gods of Rome; and in the Jewish religion God for a long time was regarded only as the God of the people of Israel: but with Christianity all this was changed. The truth of the universality of God's care for man, and of the universality of a capacity for true religion in man, was known in some degree to some of the Jewish prophets; and it was expressed in one striking sentence by Alexander the Great, when he said, "God is the common father of all men, especially of the best men." But it was placed in the forefront of the Jewish doctrine only when Christianity was revealed. Read the description of the Judgment in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew, and also the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. The supreme object of our worship was now known as the God, not of Judaism only, not of Christianity only, but of all good men, — and, as far as there is any goodness in them, of all men throughout the world.

Thirdly, It is a truth running parallel with this, that in the Christian dispensation morality is religion, and religion, morality; or that religion is the sanctification of morality, and morality is the action of religion. This

great principle had, no doubt, been foreshadowed by the warning of the Jewish prophets, and by Grecian philosophers and poets; but it was through the first teaching of Christianity that it assumed paramount importance. However much in the various churches correct opinion, or correct ceremonial, or decoration of churches, or venerations of priesthood and ecclesiastical independence, have taken the place of morality, and however enormous the crimes which have been perpetrated in the name of religion have been, still the better and wiser spirits of every age of Christendom have recognized the fact that the original principles of our faith teach exactly the reverse. Read the description in the beatitudes of those that are truly happy, read the two great commandments, read the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, read the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, — and you will see how, in each original conception of Christianity, the moral elements of religion outweigh all others.

Fourthly, It is the goodness thus made most essential in the religious man, and in man altogether, which gives us the best conception of God. This principle no doubt existed in some degree in heathen religion, and to a large degree in the Jewish; but in the former it was liable to constant obscuration. The Homeric divinities, as a general rule, were not better, but worse, than the Homeric heroes; the description of God in the Old Testament, again, was often too far removed from human thought, represented to us in the form of human goodness; but the Christian idea of God was that it is the perfection of virtue and wisdom. God is love; God is light; and when to this we add that the Founder of our religion is set before us, not only as an example of humanity, but as the representation and personification of divinity, this truth

concerning the moral nature of the divine essence attains that vividness and power which has never been reached in any other faith. In all these theories, if not equal, at any rate in a predominant and impressive form, the chief, Supreme Ruler is set before us as a mirror in which we see the perfection of the Deity. The more human the representation of His virtues, the more we feel Him to be divine The more attractive and persuasive to all our moral convictions, so much the more we feel that He has disclosed to us the secret of Him whom no man hath seen or can see.

But, fifthly, it is not enough that there should be this general identification of morality with religion, or of this perfect human goodness with the Divine nature. We have to ask, What are the special points of goodness on which Christianity lays the chief stress? The chief virtues of Greek morality were fortitude, wisdom, self-control, and justice; of the ancient Roman religion, patriotism and imperial courage; of the Hebrew religion, resignation, reverence, and faith. All these several virtues have their places in Christianity; but there are other moral gifts which shine with the most transcendent glory in the New Testament. The main characteristics of the Founder of our religion and of His disciples are kindness, universal kindness and beneficence, to which is given the new name of grace, love, or charity; purity in word and deed, to which is given the new name of holiness, or consecration to God; truthfulness and absolute sincerity, to which the very word became a synonyme of the Founder's life; humility and lowliness, for which neither Greek nor Latin had any adequate expression;—these were the principles which, in the Epistles, were deemed to be essentially Christian, and which were called divine.

Sixthly, There is the method by which these qualities, whether in God or man, were to be propagated and ex-

tended in the world. One is the process which regards the individual himself: it is self-abnegation; that is, the constant sacrifice of the lower part of his nature to the nighest and best. In every one of us there is this higher and this lower nature. It is for the disciples of Christianity to find out, to endeavor to find out, what is the better part that is the one thing needful; and for this a transformation, a transfiguration, and a regeneration of the soul, is necessary; the constant renunciation of that which is behind; the perpetual reaching forward to that which is before; the noble ambition which is satisfied with nothing less than the highest ideal. This sense of the need of an endless moral renovation and progress, this dissatisfaction with the littleness and meanness of things earthly and commonplace, and striving after things above us, — that is what is called in the New Testament by many names, all meaning the same thing,—conversion, repentance, the second birth, the cross, the grave, the resurrection, the new life, a spiritual mind. Of this, heathen moralists speak but little, — even the Jewish psalmists and prophets only in their loftiest flights. But of this the New Testament is full. It is the forgiveness of sins, of which the most consummate picture is given in the story of the Prodigal Son; it is that which is described with a peculiar metaphor throughout the Epistles by the word edification, which means building up one story above another; and that is the new heaven and the new earth which in figure and imagery fills the visions of the Apocalypse.

This leads us, seventhly, to the mode of looking at our fellow-men, and the judgment we are to pronounce upon them. It may be called the method, the judgment, of surprises. The principle of the New Testament is that the characters of those of whom we should least expect a great future are those in whom we shall sometimes most

surely find it. The irregular and despised publican often comes before the correct Pharisee; the generous prodigal, before the complacent elder brother; the repentant Magdalene, before the supercilious host; the outcast heathen and heretical Samaritan, before the orthodox Jew: the first last, and the last first. On this widely ramifying experience, which cuts across the grain of so many commonplace prejudices, both of the ancient and modern world, is built the whole life of the friend of sinners, the shepherd of the lost sheep, the leader of the Christian chivalry, the champion of the weak, the defender of the oppressed, the refuge of the helpless. In it is contained, so to speak, the romance, the poetry, of the gospel. This it is which makes it especially a gospel to the poor even more than the rich, the gospel to the Gentile even more than to the Jew, the gospel to little children even more than to theologians. The gospel may sometimes say to the heathen and misbeliever even more than to the Christian. This is not the way of other religions; this has often not been the way of the Christian religion; but it was in the beginning, and may yet in the end, be the way of the religion of Jesus Christ.

Eighthly, This leads us to yet another kindred principle. It is that which is held with such amazing tenacity by the gifted person lately withdrawn from among us, — Charles Kingsley; the doctrine, namely, that the whole world is God's world, and not the Devil's. There were moments when this was taught both by Hebrew and by Greek; but it was held by Christians, for the gospel set it forth in its most commanding and persuasive form. Alone of the founders of religions, our Founder was no hermit, no ascetic, no visionary, no armed soldier. He lived a social, happy life with the sons and daughters of men: eating and drinking, delighting in the merry faces of little children, considering the lilies of the field and the

birds of the air; making no distinction, except for the sake of tender scruples, between Christian and heathen, between the world and the Church; and as he was in his life, so were his first followers in their teaching, — that of all created things, which God had cleansed, there was not one that Peter was allowed to call common or unclean. Among all the institutions of the earth, there is none which Paul regards with so much reverential awe as the laws of the ancient Roman empire. Among all the predictions of St. John, none is more majestic than that which declares that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ. The identification of things secular with things sacred, the refusal to acknowledge any thing as supremely sacred except what is good, or profane except what is sinful, — this is the wide-reaching principle of the gospel which strikes at the root of a thousand superstitions, and is the fruitful source of a thousand truths. It carries with it the hope of the final triumph of good over evil. It carries with it the germ of all modern philosophy, modern art and statesmanship. This is the element which liberates, redeems, and purifies both the Church and the world.

Along with this there is, ninthly, the principle that the darkest and dreariest side of human life has also a glorious and divine aspect: sorrow, suffering, pain, and death, — all those evils of which the existence and the very thought shake the faith and try the patience, and overcloud the serenity, even of the best, and which in Jewish and in Pagan religions were for the most part regarded as curses and penalties, as signs of wrath, as works of the Devil, — all these are in the gospel transformed and transfigured so as to be represented, if not as blessings, yet at least as the channels of blessings, if not as direct gifts of divine love, yet as opportunities for working out the purposes of that divine love to the human race. The rude

manger of Bethlehem, the reproaches of Nazareth, the hardships of Capernaum, the tears of Bethany, the cross of Calvary, all concentrate in one focus what the great German poet Goethe called the divine depth of sorrow, — out of which, as out of all sorrow and pain, is to be wrought the improvement, the redemption, the regeneration, the purification, of mankind. Contrast the Prometheus of Æschylus, contrast the riddle of the book of Job, with the unhesitating, unswerving termination of the gospel story, — the glorified humiliation of bereavement and grief. This is the peculiarity of Christianity, which was but seen afar off by Hebrew prophet or Grecian seer; but which, even in the worst corruptions of Christian faith, has retained its hold on the human spirit.

This leads me, tenthly, to this principle, that religion, as viewed by Christianity, is spiritual; that it depends not on material or formal or technical questions of any kind, but on its connection with the invisible spirit of man, with the invisible spirit of God. Hence the definition that God is a spirit, and that his true worship is in the spirit; hence the constant use of parables in our Savior's teaching, that we might always be taught to turn from the letter to the spirit, — to remember that the spirit, even in all sacred writings, is greater than the letter; hence the absence of any form of ritual, or any form of government, prescribed in the New Testament; hence the persistent command to look from the outward to the inward, from the outside to the inside, from the act to the motive, from external, particular words and deeds to the character as a whole, from the things which are seen to the things which are unseen, from the sufferings which are but for the moment to the eternal which belongs to all time and all space. It is not that the acts and graces and courtesies of life are of no value. Yes, they are of value; but their value is as nothing compared with a high, honorable, upright course

of life. It is not that the splendor of worship or the simplicity of worship, the excellence of music or the beauty of architecture, have no attraction for the truly Christian mind. Yes, they have much attraction; but compared with matters of duty, — compared with charity, forbearance, humility, and truth, — they have in the judgment of the supreme God very slight attraction, indeed. Hence, again, the new light thrown by Christianity, as I said at the outset, on the doctrine of immortality, the new solution of the perplexing difficulties concerning a future state, — the principle, namely, that it rests on spiritual communion with the Eternal. The silence concerning all details, combined with the clearness of conviction which pervades the New Testament on the divine existence of the spirit after death, is the crowning consolation that we have won from the evangelic and apostolic account of the resurrection and of heaven.

These, then, are the ten chief inward principles which lie behind all the facts, institutions, and history of Christianity; which would not, so far as we know, have struck root in the world at all but for the coming of Christianity; and which, wherever they are found bearing fruit, constitute a Christian, whatever be the outward profession; which, wherever they are not found, cause a failure, a falling short of the privileges and the hope, the consolations, of Christianity. These ten principles, let me, for the sake of clearness, briefly repeat. They are, — firstly, the universal benevolence of God as our Father; secondly, the universal capacity for religion in mankind as His children; thirdly, religion is the sanctification of morality, and morality is the action of religion; fourthly, the identification of moral goodness with the divine nature; fifthly, the supreme importance of charity, purity, truth, and humility; sixthly, the necessity and the possibility of continued progress, both in the individual and in the race; seventhly

the reversal of the superficial judgments of the world; eighthly, the identification of things secular and things sacred; ninthly, the divinity of sorrow and suffering; and, tenthly, the spiritual character of real religion, both in worship and in doctrine.

There are three observations which I have to make on the enumeration of these principles, before I conclude.

First, I would wish to impress upon you that the enforcement of these principles does not supersede or conflict with any of the various doctrines or institutions which any of us, in our several sects or churches, may have learned in childhood, manhood, or old age. No. What I wish you to understand is, that these principles lie behind and above those mere technical and outward manifestations of religion. Turn them, if you like, into other phrases. Clothe them, if you will, in more ordinary forms of speech. The words I have used to express them are perhaps not better — perhaps are worse — than those which others may choose for themselves. At any rate, they may serve as touchstones to enable us to know whether we have really grasped the faith which we all believe that we have in common; or whether we are merely repeating words by rote, and contenting ourselves with the husks and shells, with the beggarly elements of Judaism and heathenism. Somewhere or other, in our conception of Christianity, we must find room for these fundamental principles; or else we shall have missed some of the main purposes for which Christianity was given to us.

Secondly, perchance to some of us the thought that these ten principles, or something like these ten principles, are among the chief products of our religion, may give us a new ground for the hope that is in us, — a pledge that the Christian religion is not dead or dying, but is still instinct with immortal life. No doubt, the human intellect and the human conscience do themselves oc-

casionally suffer relapses. The supply of lofty souls and great intelligences may sometimes dwindle, peak and pine. And, with that decay, those privileges which we have enumerated may for a time decay also. But there is an inextinguishable source of life in the very width and depth of their nature; and that, even if they should for a time be forced out of and beyond the Christian pale, they will strike root elsewhere, and that as they were the Alpha, or beginning, of the education of Christendom, so also they will be the Omega, its end. They form, indeed, the tissue of the common Christianity of which we speak. And this common Christianity, so viewed, is certainly, at least as definite, precise, and intelligible as any of the special forms in which it has been clothed: for it is the Christianity of little children, and of the very poor; it is the Christianity of the greatest philosophers; it is the Christianity of States and statesmen.

There is, finally, thus a supreme stimulus to our hope, that these principles, of which I have been speaking to you, incontestably made their way, not by being enunciated as dry and formal statements, nor by outward authority, nor by the sword of conquerors, but by being personified, exemplified, made flesh and blood in Him who was manifested on earth in these very things; that it is this living, personal interest which gave them their first chance, and which has ever since maintained their universal capability of application. You may remember, some of you, those fine lines of the Poet Laureate, in his "In Memoriam":—

> "We yield all blessing to the name
> Of Him that made them current coin:
>
> "For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
> Where truth in closest words shall fail,
> When truth embodied in a tale
> Shall enter in at lowly doors.

"And so the Word had breath; and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought."

Yes; and the poet might have added, more strong than all philosophic or theologic thought. Christianity is what it is by the fact that there once lived upon earth a sacred and divine life,—sacred and divine because it was supremely, superhumanly, and transcendently good; because it was above the limitations of time, country, and party; because it revealed to mankind the fullest insight ever given into the heart of the Eternal and Supreme: and Christianity shall be what it may yet become, in proportion as that life, or any thing like it, is lived over again in personal example and influence of any human spirit that aspires towards that perfect ideal.

I was much struck this afternoon by an extract which Mr. Oakley read from one of the earliest inspectors of schools in England. "As I go," he says, "from school to school, I perceive in each a distinctive character, which is that of the master. I look at the school and I look at the master, and there is no mistaking the resemblance: his idiosyncrasy has passed upon the school. I seem to see him reflected in the children as in so many fragments of a broken mirror." Yes, it is perfectly true with regard to masters in schools. I know it myself. I remember, when engaged in education at Oxford, we tutors of the different colleges used to look with the utmost interest at the different types of character and intelligence impressed upon the scholars who came from our different public schools. I remember how this type penetrated even into details; how the sagacious observer of character at one of the colleges said, on seeing the original handwriting of the greatest public teacher in this century, "That is the handwriting which I have seen in a hundred different forms

in the handwriting of all the scholars that came from Rugby."

Now it is this power of impressing our own characters on others which is especially given to school-masters and school-mistresses of any institution; it is the power which is their greatest privilege and their greatest responsibility. It is also the best illustration, — with all reverence be it spoken, — the best of the illustrations and the effect produced on the world by the Founder of our common Christianity, and also of our relations towards him. Whenever any trait of justice, or generosity, or far-sighted wisdom, or wide tolerance, or compassion, or purity, is seen in any man or woman throughout the whole human race, there, as in the fragments of a broken mirror, we see the reflection of the Divine image. There we see, as in the various characters of a manifold handwriting, the letters, the turns, the spirit of the character of his hand. If, in the effect produced among us on any single human will, we see any one of the principles which I have endeavored to describe; if we see truthfulness, if we see graciousness, if we see perception, the keen perception of the true needs of his or her time or situation; if in the effect on the world, if even in a few instances, some such boy or girl, some such man or woman, were planted in any neighborhood, in any nation, in any church, — would not definite, precise, unmistakable evidence be seen of the principles of our common Christianity, because it would express the incontestable features, the unquestionable characteristics of our common Master?

[No. 22]

TWO STORIES OF THE KING

BY

CHARLES F. DOLE.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

TWO STORIES OF THE KING.

THE first story, as I used to hear it, was as follows: —

There was once a king who had absolute power over his subjects. This king had a young prince and a splendid court of attendants. It seemed to him good, however, to have more attendants about himself and the prince. He accordingly took this singular measure to secure them. He established a school in one of the districts of the kingdom, and into this school he gathered all the children who lived in the district. They had no choice but to come in. He made very strict laws for the school; some of them written and some of them not written at all. He gave all the children one term of trial; and he promised that whoever kept all the laws for this term should be promoted to a place in the royal court. But whoever broke one of these laws should lose his chance of promotion; and not only that, but he should be whipped for every offence. And, as though it was not enough for the children to lose their chance of promotion and be whipped besides, as often as they did wrong; this king added one further threat, that all the children who failed of promotion should be sent, after their term closed, to a distant and terrible dungeon, and confined there in torment with the worst criminals as long as their miserable lives lasted.

It was also said that the king left the school the first term to be managed by the oldest boy who lived in the

district; and that, if he had managed it right, no one of the rest would ever have done wrong; but that, if he made a single mistake, the school was sure to go wrong ever after. And the king let a very bad man into the school, who persuaded this oldest boy to disobey, and so evil was started in the school. (This seems to me so unlikely, however, that I cannot think it belongs to the original story.)

Now, it happened just as you would naturally expect with this singular school. Some of the children came very ignorant, some were sick, some were born of degraded parents; the school was full of temptations; and, out of thousands who spent a term in it, and during many years in which it was kept, nobody ever succeeded in fulfilling its conditions. The king, however, wanted attendants at his court, and every term he was supposed to have taken some children to his capital, — mostly from one family: all the multitude of the rest were sent to the terrible and hopeless dungeon.

Some said he saved these because he chose to do so, others did not explain why; but none of them, certainly, had deserved to be saved any more than the others, since all alike had broken the king's conditions. It was necessary, however, since the king was unable to break or change his laws, that some arrangement should be made by which he could be legally warranted in keeping these children at court, while he sent all the others to torment. For, by and by, there was to be a great public examination at the capital, and all the children who had ever been a term in the school were going to pass their trial; and, of course, it was certain that all would be condemned; and the children already in the dungeon were to be brought out and put to shame before the royal court for their failure to keep the perfect rule of the school; and though some said they were going to be put to death, the most said that

they were to be sent down again to the dungeon, to be tortured with torment worse than death, and the king would not hear their prayer when they begged to be killed instead. And the children who had been in former terms taken to court would have to be sent to the dungeon too, unless some way was found to avoid the terms of the law and get them a pardon.

Meantime, things grew worse and worse in the school, — as was natural under such hopeless conditions; and the children of the district are said to have grown more disobedient and reckless every term. And the king would have drowned them in his anger, had he not, long ago, done this very thing, without any effect, besides having given his royal seal that he never would do so again. He therefore devised the following remarkable plan, or scheme, for his school. He agreed with the prince that he should spend a term in it, just like the rest of the children. He had been educated beforehand at his father's court, and he was, therefore, able with great ease to keep the rules, and to resist the temptations which were so strong for the ordinary peasant children. You would think now that the prince had a glorious chance to help the children of the district to keep the rules: and it is believed that he did help them somewhat; but this was not the reason why the king sent him. Indeed, since he could never be expected to help them to keep every rule, and, since a single disobedience was enough to lose the chance of promotion, it would have done little good for him to help them in this way. But the idea was, that the prince should stir up the passions and put himself in the way of the bad children in the school, till they should finally beat him and drive him out of the district. And if a drop of the blood-royal was spilt, after that the king and the prince could be legally permitted to clear any one whom they chose from going to the dungeon. For one drop of the prince's blood was

thought to be worth more than all the lives of all the ordinary children. (There were various strange theories how this could be, and some insisted that it was important to know how; but the general feeling was that the fact was enough.)

All this took place, and the king allowed it; and the prince's term in the school closed with abuse and suffering Then the king made a new proclamation: "Whereas, my son has gone into the rebel district; and whereas, being innocent, the bad children have made him to suffer; I hereby hold myself free to clear from prison on his account the children who went to court in former terms of the school. And hereafter I freely forgive and promote any children; provided, before the end of their term, they confess, first, that they believe my management of the school is perfectly fair; and, second, that what the prince suffered in the last hour of his term was a just offset to the torments in prison of all the thousands of ordinary children who ever went through the school. Whoever admitted that he believed these things, and looked to the blood of the prince to clear him from prison, should be sent to the court; and whoever did not admit it, however good a scholar he tried to be during his term, should be sent to the terrible prison just as before." This was the proclamation which the king made; in order, he said, that no one any longer need ever go to the prison.

And after this things went on in the school for as many as eighteen or nineteen years; and a great many children went through the school, term after term; and still, just as before, only a few were ever promoted to court; and the awful majority were sent to the dungeon. Indeed, in some benches of the school, the children never as much as heard of the new proclamation, or even distinctly of the original laws of the school. For the king was said to have

provided only one original document, and had taken no very great pains to have it posted in different parts of the school. He had even left this work to the children to do, who mostly neglected it. Moreover, the school grew little, if any, better. For while some had forgotten the very existence of the king, because, for many terms neither he nor the prince, nor any court-messenger, had entered it, those few benches who read his proclamation signed the confession easily enough; and some of them, indeed, really tried harder to keep the rules; but the most of them did not appear different from other children, and some few were rather worse. For they seemed to say to themselves: "We shall go to the court anyway on the prince's account; and this term here does not much matter; and we shall never have any chance for sport at the capital, unless we take it here." Moreover, there was another set of children who were very inquisitive, and they used to talk in this way: "This is the worst school," said they, "which ever was heard of. The king might have *known* how it would turn out. Why did he compel us to enter it? We did not want it. *Why* couldn't he give us but one term to try in? Why! our poor fathers and mothers, who don't know a thousandth part as much as the king, used to be fairer than that with us. They always forgave us, whenever we tried again to do right." "Oh! wasn't it bad enough," these inquiring children asked, "wasn't it bad enough to lose your chance of promotion for ever by a single disobedience, without being sent to prison besides all your lives, without any hope or pity?" "Didn't it look," they used to whisper to each other, "as though the king never had meant to save but a few?" "Or had the king," they almost trembled to think, "made a terrible mistake with his school?" For they were accustomed to hear it called a failure, and were sometimes told that it was going to be burned by and by.

But some of them began to study his new proclamation, and thought, as they studied it, that they saw reason for hope. And they read it in this way: "Maybe the king means that whoever, after this proclamation, leaves off disobeying, and tries to be as good as the prince was, somehow or other the king will forgive him and take him to court." And they began to be glad, and to follow the rules as the prince did when he was in the school; and they remembered some beautiful words which he had spoken about gentleness and truth, and honesty and forgiveness.

Now there was a set of the children who took on themselves specially to teach the rest, because the king had not sent any schoolmaster to teach the children for many years, but had left them to teach each other as well as they could. And when they found what the inquisitive children were saying, and how they were beginning to be hopeful about their chance of promotion, they came and said that these others had quite misunderstood the proclamation, and that *trying to be good* did not help any one. "But you must 'believe,'" they said, "what we tell you about these things; viz., first, that you ought by good rights to go to prison for ever for a single disobedience; and, second, that the prince's suffering, a good many years ago, is a fair offset for any amount of torment to thousands of ordinary children. If you believe this," they said, "you will have pardon. But if you don't believe this," they threatened, "you cannot be pardoned; and, unless you are pardoned, your good character in the school is not enough to give you promotion, and you will have to be sent to the dungeon just as before."

And by and by, moreover, it came to be claimed in the school that it was not enough even to sign the confession, much less to try to behave like the prince: but you must be willing to undergo some strange process, and

have your natural mind taken away before you could have pardon; and after that you would be able to believe things which before, to the natural mind, seemed incredible. And some said, that any who pleased could have their "minds changed;" but the brighter ones were inclined to think only those who were specially chosen. All the rest who did not have their minds changed before they left the school (and some of them were very amiable children) would have to go to the dungeon. I read, too, that some of the best of the inquisitive children answered very deliberately to this, that, if such were really the case, they would prefer to go along with their brothers and sisters to suffer in prison, rather than go to the court of such a terrible king. "For," said they, "we are sure of the goodness of our brothers and sisters; and our own poor parents have taught us better than to care, for the sake of our own selfish pleasure, to live even at the king's court."

Here the story came to an end, and the strangest thing of it all was, that it was said to have been thought in old times that this king was the greatest, kindest, and best who had ever reigned; that he did all these things because he *loved* the children, and because he was wiser and juster than any one else!

Now, the more I thought of this story and tried to believe it, the more monstrous it seemed; till I began to doubt whether any such king ever lived; and I read many books and studied the ancient chronicles, to know, if possible, what the truth was; and, at last, I found out all about it. Now this strange story did not go back to the age of the great king at all. And I learned the true story, and I wondered to think how such a terrible tale could ever have grown out of the beautiful and simple record of those early books.

The true story was something like this. It seemed that

all the children belonged to the blood-royal, and the king loved to be called their great Father; and he trained all the children to be his soldiers, and his courtiers, and his officers of state. He had vast dominions, and places were ready as fast as the children were worthy to fill them. But in all his kingdom he would not have a servant who was not brave, and true, and honest, and kind, like himself. So he trained his children for their high career. And I learned that it was not easy work, but cost time and money and patience; and it was not strange that the children did not always see what good it was going to do them. And I learned a good deal about a particular room in the school; for the records were mostly silent about other rooms. The children here began mostly young and poor and ignorant; and the term was short. And I saw the king's wonderful patience with them. All he asked in this short term was, that they should work and make gain. And he seemed to pity them so much, because it was hard for them to learn, and because they were naturally so slow. And he gave them all kinds of help, and steadily made the school better term after term. And there were some wonderful scholars now and then in the school; and when they came, the king showed them how to teach the rest; and I read that there was one particular lad who came for a term, when there seemed to be a crisis in the school. No one had ever been so good before, and no one had come up to him since. Indeed, some, after he was gone, said he was the prince from the court, whom the king had sent on purpose to help the school. Anyway, the king loved him very much, and showed him how to do a deal of good for all the other scholars. And this shows how kind he was, that, when some of the children abused him, he asked the king to forgive them, because, he said, they didn't know any better. And it came to pass, when he went away, that

some of the scholars formed a society in the school, which they called by his name; and they all agreed to help each other learn and to live for the king, and to try to be like their wonderful friend. And it was beautiful to see how happy these children were who belonged to this society; and it spread among all the benches of the school.

And I read that every day in that school there was a sort of examination. No examination was ever so fair and kind. If a scholar had made any gain that day in the things taught in the school, — viz., courage, kindness, obedience, promptness, and wisdom, — he was seated higher accordingly; and if he made any loss in these things, he had to go down: so exact was the daily trial; and no scholar ever lost or gained without the king giving him credit.

And I read that, at the end of each term, every scholar went up to have his place given him by the king. Wherever he belonged, and whatever he had fitted himself for, there he went: a few, I think, who had made special progress, to the court, to serve the king there; a few of the wisest and best, to learn the king's business in the provinces; others, to higher rooms in the school, where they could learn faster. But what of those who had missed their chances in this lower room? They had to go down where they belonged; each one, according to the place where he stood, when his turn came to go out of the school. And when some of the children were careless and disobedient, or if they disgraced their royal name by falsehood and cowardice and unkindness, however the king pitied them, he was not able to save them from pain and shame; and nothing could save them unless they turned and began again to learn the king's lesson. Thus all was perfectly fair; and every thing served in that school to warn the children against doing evil, and to show them the beauty and goodness of living for the

sake of the king. And it came to pass that such children as lived in this way hardly thought of the future, or only thought of it as a happy hope, so busy were they with learning and doing the king's service. Neither did they concern themselves where he should place them, they trusted so fearlessly to his perfect justice and love

[No. 23]

ORTHODOX VIEWS OF THE ATONEMENT EXAMINED

BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

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The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
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(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

ORTHODOX VIEWS OF THE ATONEMENT EXAMINED.

I PURPOSE to speak of the doctrine of the Atonement, as it has been held, and as it is held by those who consider themselves the orthodox; and also as it has been lately illustrated and explained in the lectures of Rev. Joseph Cook. This doctrine of the Atonement is considered to be at once the most important, vital, and essential of all the orthodox doctrines. It is also one of the most obscure and difficult to understand. The doctrine of the Trinity as a proposition is perfectly plain. There is no obscurity in the statement. The only question is, Is it true or is it not true? The doctrine of the Atonement, on the other hand, has always been a very confused doctrine in the minds of those who have held it. I remember once conversing with an old gentleman who had been an orthodox minister until he was too old to preach, and he told me that in a conversation with a large number of the most eminent orthodox divines the question was proposed, — What is the doctrine of the Atonement? No two, he said, could be found to agree in their definitions, and they finally admitted that it was one of the most difficult things either to understand or to state. Dr. Bushnell, one of the most eminent theologians orthodoxy has produced in modern times, — although it is proper to say that in some respects he is regarded as a heretic among them, never being punished, however, for his heresy, or expelled from the denomination, but always remaining in communion with the orthodox, —

in his work called "God in Christ" speaks, in one of the parts which discusses the Atonement, of this great division in the minds of the orthodox as to its meaning. He says that from the beginning to the present time "it has ever been held, on the orthodox side of the church, to be a redemptive offering paid to God; not, however, in any such form as indicates the existence of a settled and uniform opinion on the subject. There is a general concurrence in the words *vicarious*, *expiation*, *offering*, *substitute*, and the like, but no agreement as to the manner in which they are to get their meaning. Sometimes the analogy of criminal law is taken; and then our sins are spoken of as being transferred to Christ, or he as having accepted them to bear the penalty. Sometimes the civil or commercial law furnishes the analogy; and then, our sins being taken as a debt, Christ offers himself as a ransom for us. Or the analogy of the ceremonial law is accepted; and then Christ is set forth as a propitiatory, or expiatory offering, to obtain remission of sins for us." And he says, further: "On the whole I know of no definite and fixed point on which the orthodox view, so called, may be said to hang, unless it be this; viz., that Christ suffers evil as evil, or in direct and simple substitution for evil that was to be suffered by us." And then he goes on to oppose that doctrine, and to say that it cannot be sustained, that he cannot defend it. Dr. Bushnell also says, — and I will read this, because Mr. Cook has expressed great disapprobation at those who accuse the orthodox of saying that Christ was punished in the place of human sinners, — "Calvin maintains the truly horrible doctrine that Christ descended into hell when crucified, and suffered the pains of the damned for three days." I have read these passages to show that, in the opinion of one of the most eminent orthodox theologians in New England, — one who certainly knew as much about the

opinion of the theologians of the day as any man now does, — there is no agreement among orthodox theologians as to the theory of Atonement. They hold that Christ by his death, somehow or other, has enabled God to forgive sinners. They are all agreed as to that; but as to the question, *how* God forgives sinners, they are not agreed at all.

Let me say, in the next place, that in the New Testament there is a great deal said of the influence of the death of Christ in bringing about the pardon of sin. We read many passages there, some from the lips of Christ himself and others from the Apostles, to the effect that Christ gave his life "a ransom for many;" that we were redeemed from our iniquities by the precious blood of Christ; that he died for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; that he was an offering for sin; that he was the paschal offering, — "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us;" and so on. We must meet all the facts of the case, and among the facts is certainly this one: that the New Testament does lay great stress upon the death of Christ in regard to its influence on the pardon of mankind, the pardon of human sin. The question arises, What is that influence, and how does it come about? Here comes in theory, here comes in theology. And now, in order that we may understand this theory, seeing it is so confused in the minds of most of us by the mixture of a great many different notions, and by the use of the same language in common by persons who differ entirely in their views of the meaning of that language, — in order that we may understand as definitely as possible what the doctrine of the Atonement is, we must look at what it has been. By a short historical survey alone can we get any clear idea upon the subject.

Let me say, then, that for the earliest theologians we must go back almost to the time of the apostolic fathers,

beginning with Irenæus, who is one of the earliest Christian fathers who has any thing to say on the subject. All the early Christian teachers and writers took hold of those expressions in the New Testament which call Christ's death a ransom, or speak of it as a redemption. That was what impressed their minds. We are slaves, in some way, and are to be redeemed. Sin is a slavery. We are under a terrible and cruel master, and we are to be redeemed from his power. Some ransom has to be paid to this power of evil, this power of darkness. It was very natural that in the early centuries of the church this should have been the idea which took possession of the minds of the thinkers. Their thought laid hold of those theories which make sin a slavery, and a slavery brought about by war. In those days, whenever two nations went to war with each other, the prisoners were sold as slaves. That was the universal custom. And the only way by which the slaves could get their freedom was by having their friends pay a ransom and redeem them. When the fathers found in the New Testament such words as "ransom" and "redemption" applied to the work of Christ, they immediately took hold of these words, because they were what they were accustomed to. They lived in the midst of the horrors of war, of slavery, of cruelty. For nearly a thousand years the church continued in the midst of persecutions from without and from within; first, from the Roman Empire; then afterwards came all the terrible cruelties and evils resulting from the invasions of the northern tribes, the Goths and the Vandals, &c. And so in that age of suffering from slavery, that age of outward evils of all kinds, Christian teachers took hold of these ideas and made them the basis of a theory of Atonement. And then, still holding to these words, "ransom" and "redemption," they said If we are slaves, to whom are we slaves? The person

who holds us as slaves is the one to whom the ransom is to be paid. We are to be redeemed from the power of a cruel task-master; therefore the ransom cannot be paid to God, for God is not a cruel task-master. That was the first point they made out. Who, then, is the power? The power is the devil. They had a universal belief in those days of the reality of the devil as the prince of evil. All evil came from him. Then, said they, If we are to be redeemed from the power of evil, we are to be redeemed by being ransomed from the devil. Strange as all this may seem to us now, for one thousand years in the church this doctrine was the orthodox and universally believed doctrine of the Atonement, — universal with a few exceptions, because a few protested against it. It was the almost universal doctrine of the church that Christ redeemed us from the power of the devil; that every man who commits sin, by that sin becomes properly the slave of the devil; that the devil has his rights to the man, who can only escape from the power of the devil by these rights being satisfied. And now the theory was that Christ redeemed us from the power of the devil by allowing the devil to put him to death. The devil had no power over Christ, for Christ had not committed sin. He had no right, then, to take the life of Christ; yet it was by the instigation of the devil that the persecutors of Christ, the Jews and the Romans, put him to death. Then the devil found himself on the wrong side. He had done something which he had no right to do, and, therefore, in order to make up for doing that which he had no right to do, he was obliged to give up all those who belonged to Christ. Christ had overpaid the devil to that amount, and the devil must pay him back; and the only way to do so was by giving up those victims whom he had secured before. You may think it strange that this should have been the orthodox theory in the

church, but it was the theory held for a thousand years. It was worked out by Irenæus, developed still further by Origen, and continued to be the theory of the church, being taught, in some form or other, by the principal fathers and teachers of the church, but always with this fundamental idea, that Christ redeemed us from the power of the devil. And the ransom was paid to the devil, not to God, for we are not slaves to God, but slaves to the evil power. As long as they clung to these two words, "ransom" and "redemption," so long, it is evident, they could not get away from that theory.

But after a while all these ages of war and cruelty passed away. The conquerors of the Roman Empire were tamed. They were Christianized. A peaceful period came in. They became aware of their need of law, and they went to the Roman law, which was accepted and studied. It was made one of the principal objects of study in all the great schools; and in all the ecclesiastical schools, — there were hardly any others, — they not only studied theology, but they studied civil law. Then arose the second great theory of the Atonement, the theory based on the law of debt and payment; and it was the theory which was brought to its perfection by the famous Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, and scholar of Lanfranc, who was one of the greatest theologians of his age, and was born before the middle of the eleventh century. Anselm gave another theory of the Atonement, and his theory was that of "satisfaction." His theory was that the payment was made to God, and not to the devil. He maintained that the devil had no rights at all, and was not to be considered in the case. He defined sin as not paying to God what we owe him. That was his definition of sin, — not paying the debt due to God. We owe to God, said he, perfect obedience. Whenever a man disobeys God he incurs the guilt of sin; and the glory of God, and the

honor of God, and the justice of God, require either that he shall be punished or that satisfaction shall be made to the honor of God. Now, satisfaction, you see, and punishment are here two different things. In that theory, satisfaction is one thing and punishment is another. And how can satisfaction be made? Evidently man cannot make it himself, says Anselm, because he is obliged to pay to God the full debt, and that is more than he can do. His whole future life is only paying the debt due to God, and how shall the demand on account of his past sins be met? We have an infinite obligation to God, he says, and every time we do not fulfil that obligation we ought to endure an infinite penalty; for, since the bribe of the whole universe ought not to tempt us to disobey God, it is evident that sin is of more importance than the whole universe. Now, since man owes this debt and cannot pay it, — only God can pay such a debt, — therefore Christ became God-man. The title of Anselm's treatise is, "Cur Deus Homo?" or, "Why did God become a Man?" and the answer is, In order to pay the debt which man owes, and make satisfaction to God. And Christ, says Anselm, made satisfaction to God, not by his life, because as a man he was bound always to perform the perfect obedience which man owes to God. Nothing is gained, then, by the life of Christ. But he was not obliged to die, and, being God-man, in his death the infinite character of the Godhead comes in and makes full equivalent of all that is due from man to God. Now, that is the theory of satisfaction, and that endured for about five hundred years. The first theory lasted about a thousand years, and the second about five hundred; in fact, down to about the time of the Reformation.

With the Reformation came in a third class of ideas, — ideas concerning governmental law, not merely of civil law, or criminal law, but also of governmental law or

jurisprudence. And at this time the Protestant theologians, Luther and Calvin and the rest, having accepted Anselm's doctrine in the main, modified it in some respects by teaching, for the first time, that Christ was punished in the place of sinners. Mr. Cook, you will observe, is continually asserting that it is a slander upon the orthodox to say that they believe that Christ is punished in the place of sinners. I am glad to think that they do not now believe it; but it is idle to say that they have not believed it, because this was the almost universal doctrine of Protestant theologians from the time of the Reformation until a comparatively recent period. It was the general doctrine of Protestant theologians that Christ was punished in the place of sinners, and the first attack upon that doctrine was made by the Socinians; and when our friend Mr. Cook cries out in indignation against the idea of an innocent person being punished in the place of the guilty, he is really following the lead of the early Socinians. They were the first to attack this theory in the church, and by the power of their arguments they drove from the field the old doctrine and obliged the orthodox to substitute another. For example, Socinus argued that this doctrine of satisfaction made to the justice of God, so that every debt can be fully paid to God, utterly destroyed the quality of mercy in the Almighty; for if every debt is paid, how can God be merciful? how can he forgive when there is nothing to forgive? On this theory it was asserted, therefore, that the justice of God was made virtually the only attribute of the Almighty and his mercy and his love are entirely ignored. Moreover, the Socinians asserted, not only is justice made, in the minds of the theologians, the chief attribute of God, but it is a justice which is injustice; for how can you speak of justice which inflicts punishment upon the innocent in the place of the sinner? And the argument

was brought forward with great force against the Protestant doctrine that Christ is punished in the place of the sinner, — by his death taking the place of the sinner and being punished in his stead. Luther and the other theologians had first begun to speak of the active and passive obedience of Christ. Christ they said, had died, was punished in the place of the sinner, so that the sinner did not now need to be punished to be saved from hell; but the sinner was not got into heaven until Christ, by his whole life, took his place and performed all the meritorious actions which enabled the sinner to come to heaven. That was their theory. The Socinians replied, How can you transfer holiness from one person to another? How can the holiness of Christ take the place of the holiness required of man to fit him for heaven? Man is only made fit for heaven by being holy himself, and the holiness of Christ cannot be transferred on the one side, any more than the punishment of Christ can be transferred on the other. These arguments were enforced with so much ability on the part of the Socinians, that that theory was also demolished, just as the first theory, that man was a slave to the devil, had been demolished.

Then came the third orthodox theory which was first brought forward by Hugo Grotius. Grotius was also one of the great founders of the modern doctrines concerning government. The idea of government filled his mind, and so his theory of Atonement was a governmental theory.

He said that the object of the death of Christ was to make it possible for God in his government to forgive sin without injuring the character of his government, and that a government which should forgive sin without satisfaction being made to it in any way, would be a feeble and powerless government. Something must be done to prevent the law from being dishonored, and the death of Christ comes in to make such an impression on the mind of

man of the evil of sin that the same result is produced as if man had been punished; so that Christ, although he is not punished by any means in the place of sinners, yet makes it possible to God, as a righteous governor, to forgive sin without any injury to the order and peace of the universe.

That is the third orthodox doctrine of the Atonement, and that is the doctrine which, in the main, prevails now among orthodox teachers. You will see that there is this vast difference between that doctrine and all previous doctrines of the Atonement; namely, that the object now is not to produce an effect upon God, or to satisfy any of the attributes of the Almighty; it is not a transaction having its object in the other world, but it is a transaction the purpose of which is to produce an effect upon the human mind. In other words, it is a moral influence which is to be exerted. The object is to produce such an effect upon the minds of men in regard to the evil of sin that they will not take advantage of the forgiveness of God to think that sin is a very light matter, and something in which they can lightly indulge. And so the government of God is maintained in its character by the death of Christ, by producing such an effect upon the human mind touching the evil of sin.

Now, in regard to this third theory, which I say is the prevailing orthodox theory of the present time, we must make one or two objections. The other two great theories rested upon Scripture. The first theory rested upon the words "ransom" and "redemption," and other words of that character which had reference to slavery and war. The second theory rests upon those words which speak of sin as a debt; for instance, the words "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." But in the time of the New Testament there were no speculations upon jurisprudence. There were no such things as popular govern-

ment or the rights of the people understood in the world in those days; and, consequently, the rulers of the world being almost absolute, and not recognizing that they had any duties to perform to their subjects, there was nothing then to bring up such questions as were raised when the theory of Grotius was brought forward; and, therefore, we do not find any basis in Scripture, for this last theory. It is nowhere said in Scripture that Christ died in order to make it possible for God, as a good governor, to forgive sin. In the second place, that is not the object which is stated in the New Testament. The object which is there stated is, that Christ died to manifest the divine love to sinners; not to show the evil of sin, but to manifest the love of God to a sinful world: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son;" "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his only son to be the propitiation for our sins."

In fact, when you come to compare all these theories together, you will find that there is this one distinction to be made between them; namely, that some of them speak of the object of Christ as redemption, and others as reconciliation. Now, when we penetrate to the inner meaning of the word "redemption," we shall find that it really signifies this,—that it is deliverance from the power of evil; and when we look at the meaning of the word "reconciliation," we shall find the meaning to be that it brings us into union or peace or harmony with God. Now the two evils resulting from sin are these: one is, that it creates a power of evil habit; or, in other words, it depraves the character of the man himself, and we are redeemed from that by any influence which enables us to break the chain of this evil habit. The work of Christ, therefore, is redemption just so far as it enables us by the influence of his teaching, his life, his death, his resurrection, or any other influence coming from him, to

break the chain of evil habit. In that we are redeemed lies one part of the influence of Christ. The other part is reconciliation. One of the effects of the conscious violation of the law of God is to bring into the human mind the feeling of guilt and estrangement. We have done something wrong, and we feel towards God exactly as we feel towards a man when we have done him any wrong. If you have done any wrong towards a man, and are conscious of it, you do not like to see him, or to go near him; you would rather keep out of his sight. If you have the feeling that you have injured a man, and are not prepared to make proper acknowledgment or restitution, then you like to keep away from him. That is a very natural feeling. The same feeling is expressed in the Old Testament when it said that Adam hid himself from God in the garden. If any one has justly offended the Almighty by a wilful violation of the divine law, the first effect on his mind is estrangement and alienation. He does not like to think of God. If he has been in the habit of child-like trust and communion with God, a sudden cloud comes between him and the Almighty. He does not look toward God, but he turns away. That is alienation, and reconciliation is any thing which comes to him to make him feel that he can come back to be in friendly, happy communion with God. Suppose you have done wrong to somebody, have offended him or injured him in some way, and feel that you do not want to say that you have wronged him; but suppose that person should come to you and say, "I know that you have not done exactly right towards me, but I am just as much your friend as ever;" that would remove the feeling of alienation. If you do not do it, the other party might do it. Now this reconciliation, this coming of the sinner again into communion with God, is effected by Christ. That is the doctrine in the New Testament. But the question is, How

is it done? Is it done by any effect produced by Christ on the mind of God? Is God reconciled to us by the death of Christ, or are we reconciled to God by the death of Christ? Is it an effect produced on the mind of God, or is it an effect produced on the mind of man?

The orthodox theory has formerly been that it is an effect produced upon the mind of God. The rational and the liberal theory is that it is an effect produced upon the mind of man. But you will find now that a great many orthodox teachers, when pressed to explain what they mean by the modern doctrine which began with Grotius, are obliged to come to this ground, — that the only effect produced in the reconciliation of man to God is that produced upon the mind of man. And yet they use the same old language in regard to "expiation" and "redemption" and the "Vicarious Atonement," &c. But if we can only clear our ideas on this subject, we shall see that the New Testament everywhere says that Christ died, not to reconcile God to man, but to reconcile man to God. And is it not the most rational theory? God's character is not changed by any thing man can do. He remains always the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He is always infinite love towards all his creatures. If there is any estrangement between sinners and God, it is not because he is estranged from them, but because they are estranged from him; it is not because he has turned away from them, but because they have turned away from him. Here are two chords of a musical instrument. They are out of harmony with each other: the one is in tune, the other is not in tune. Which is to be modified in order that it shall be brought into harmony with the other? Evidently the one out of tune is to be modified, not the one in tune. Therefore, if there is alienation between God and man, it is not God, but man, who is to be changed, in order to effect a reconciliation. Therefore

you will find that in every case where any thing like reconciliation or forgiveness is mentioned, the Scriptures speak of man being reconciled to God, and not of God being reconciled to man. For instance: "For if, when we were enemies, *we were reconciled to God* by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. v. 10); and again, "For if the casting away of them be *the reconciling of the world*" (Rom. xi. 15). Here it is not the reconciling of God that is spoken of, but of the world. And in another very famous passage in 2 Cor. v. 19, 20, we read, "God was in Christ, *reconciling the world unto himself*," — not that God was being reconciled, — "not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, *be ye reconciled to God*." So also in Eph. ii. 13, we read, "But now in Christ Jesus *ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh* by the blood of Christ," — not, God is made nigh unto us by the blood of Christ, but we are made nigh to him; in Col. i. 21, "And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works," — according to the meaning I have just explained, — "yet now *hath he reconciled*," — he has reconciled you, not, he is being reconciled; and in 1 Pet. iii. 18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, *that he might bring us to God*."

Now we come to one other point, How does Christ bring us to God by his death? God is not to be reconciled to man: we are to be reconciled to him. But, before we come to that, I will just consider whether Mr. Cook, in his lectures, has introduced any important modification into the theory of Atonement. If you have been able to follow me in what I have said, you have in your minds

the whole history, essentially, of the doctrine of the Atonement in all its points from the beginning. Of course there are innumerable details, but you have the main threads of the doctrine in your mind. Now here is what Mr. Cook says in his lecture of April 16th, if I understand him. He is considering the doctrine of the Atonement in the light of self-evident, scientific truth. He says that "man is a sinner;" that sin "produces estrangement between the soul and God." That is so: so far we are agreed. He goes on to say: "It is not enough to repent, not enough to reform, not enough to have similarity of feeling with God, in order to have peace." It is questionable whether that is true, either in the light of Scripture or in the light of human experience. If we repent and have similarity of feeling with God, it must be inevitable that we shall have peace. At any rate, that is the doctrine of the Old Testament and of the New Testament: "When the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness which he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." That is enough to give him peace, and that is promised in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the Apostle John in his first Epistle (i. 8, 9) says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." There are both sides, you see, — reconciliation and redemption. What we have to do is to confess our sins; and confession here, of course, implies penitence. And if we repent, the faithfulness and the justice of God are pledged to forgive us. According to John, if we repent, God would be unjust if he did not forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Nothing can possibly be said stronger than that, and yet Mr. Cook says it is not enough to repent, not enough to reform,

not enough to have similarity of feeling with God, in order to have peace. He says, further, that "a man may commit a crime, repent, trust in the Atonement, hate all that God hates, love all that God loves; and yet, as long as the record of the past crime is behind him, he cannot be at peace, — entire, satisfactory peace." He says, very properly, the record of the past crime may always remain; and he says also, at the end of his lecture, very properly, that this will not give him any serious pain in heaven, because he will see that all his sins, and the sins of others, have been overruled to the honor of God and the happiness of the universe. But here, Mr. Cook says, the man will not have peace, because he will think of the record of his past sin. Although Mr. Cook does not express it distinctly, he seems to say that the man will think that something ought to be done to get rid of that record, otherwise he cannot have peace.

His first illustration is the case of a schoolmate of his who had committed murder, but who had repented of it; who believed in the Atonement, and expected to die very happy in consequence of that; and yet he could not have perfect peace because the record of his past sin was behind him. Well, if he could not have perfect peace when he repented and believed in the Atonement, I do not see what Mr. Cook could do further to give him peace. According to Mr. Cook, he already believed in the Atonement, and expected to be saved by that, so I do not see how in any way any theory of Mr. Cook could help him.

Mr. Cook then passes to the illustration of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth himself, and assumes, very curiously, that Lady Macbeth, at the time she was trying to wash the spot out of her hand, was a true penitent, and yet could not have peace, could not wash the imaginary spot of blood from her hand. He lays great stress upon that

If the case illustrates his proposition, it must be because Lady Macbeth was a true penitent; but I have read the play of Macbeth several times, and have not yet discovered that it was intended to be taught that Lady Macbeth, at the time she was suffering in that way from the pangs of remorse, was penitent. Remorse is not penitence, as we all know. Repentance implies faith in God, love to him, and willingness to bear any punishment that may come in the order of his providence; in acquiescence with his will, in being satisfied that every thing is right, and gladness in being able to confess it. None of these qualities are to he found in Lady Macbeth at that time.

Then Mr. Cook goes on to say — what we have just been saying — that personal ill-desert cannot be removed from one person to another. Our guilt is not borne by our Saviour in the sense of blameworthiness. There he is following in the footsteps of the Socinians. He would not like to be called a Socinian, I presume, but so far he is a Socinian. Then he says that guilt has two meanings: the first is personal blameworthiness; the second, obligation to render satisfaction to violated law. This second definition of guilt is brought in to make out the theory Mr. Cook is about to bring forward; but it is the first time I have heard guilt called an equivalent to obligation. Obligation to render satisfaction to violated law, he says, is guilt. I should think it were just the opposite of guilt. It is the "ghastliest of all misconceptions," he thinks, to say "that the doctrine of the Atonement implies, first, that an innocent being is made guilty in the sense of being personally blameworthy; and, secondly, that that innocent being is punished in the sense of suffering pain for personal ill-desert." There we are in accord. It is a ghastly misconception to think so; but it can hardly be called a misconception to say that anybody thinks so, when we know that it was the orthodox doctrine held by the early reformers, and only overthrown by Socinus.

Then Mr. Cook brings forward his third illustration of the doctrine of the Atonement. It is the famous case of Mr. Bronson Alcott, who related — as read by Mr. Cook with great delight and satisfaction, as fully illustrating his own theory — that when he was teaching school in this city, on one occasion, after a child had committed an offence, instead of punishing the child in any way he made the child punish him. He held out his hand, and made the child strike him on the hand with a ruler; and Mr. Alcott goes on to say that it made a great impression on the children, and rather helped the order of the school. I have no doubt whatever, that any such transaction as that would make a great impression, at first, on the minds of the children. It would call their attention to the subject, and make them think, — appear to them as something very curious, at any rate, if not very serious. But whether this can be taken as an illustration of the universal law of divine government is very doubtful. Mr. Cook says, very truly, that, according to the scientific view, a law which is true once is true always; that what works well under certain circumstances according to the laws of the divine government, must, under the same laws and under similar conditions, always work well. If that is so, let us see how this will work. Let us suppose now that at the next meeting of the Boston school committee they should introduce a rule, and pass it, to the effect that hereafter all punishment should be inflicted by scholars upon the teachers, and not by teachers upon the scholars! Would that, in the opinion of any sensible person, have the effect of improving the order of the schools? I think that the children would be entertained by it, and I think that the teachers would not find themselves very much helped after a little while. There would be one beneficial result, perhaps, produced by it, — that whipping in all its forms would soon disappear from the school. I think that the

teachers would none of them be inclined to support corporal punishment after that rule had been passed. But how evident it is that any such illustration as this must fail in showing that any justice, any right, any truth is manifested by such vicarious punishment. Mr. Cook does not, however, believe in vicarious punishment. But this illustration of his, if it has any meaning, would require that the teacher should be willing to be punished himself in place of the punishment given to the pupil. Mr. Cook attempts to evade this inference by saying that there is a difference between chastisement and punishment; that Christ was chastised in the place of sinners, not punished in their place; and that Mr. Alcott, also, was chastised, but not punished. I was immediately struck with this distinction. It seemed to me a novel one. I referred to the English dictionary, and I found that the word chastisement was defined as punishment. I could not find that the dictionaries made the distinction which our friend has made. The only difference which I could perceive between the words punishment and chastisement was this — and I think that this is the difference in meaning between the two terms, — that chastisement is that punishment which is inflicted on any person who has committed an offence, not merely from abstract justice or to maintain law, but for the good of the offender. But it must be inflicted on the offender. It must therefore be punishment having for its object the good of the offender. In this sense, therefore — if it is the true sense, — Christ could not have been chastised, because he was not an offender, and was not to be benefited by the chastisement. "He chastens, not for his own pleasure, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness." There is not one of the passages in the New Testament where chastisement is spoken of, but we are there plainly taught that chastisement is that suffering which we endure in conse-

quence of our sins, under the benign law of God, who inflicts it upon us not for his pleasure, however, but because we need it for our good. The New Testament teaches that all punishment inflicted by the Almighty has a reformatory purpose, and proceeds from a divine love, and not from a mere abstract sense of justice. Therefore it does not seem that this supposed distinction between chastisement and punishment will hold at all.

And now let us ask, in what way the death of Christ really has this reconciling effect upon man? How does Christ reconcile man to God? I think, by a law of human nature which I illustrated just now. I said that if you had offended or injured a friend, and considered that he must be necessarily offended with you, and if he should come to you and show you that he was not offended with you, and was perfectly ready to forgive you and receive you back into his friendship, then he would reconcile you to himself or you would be reconciled to him. The object of the life and death and resurrection of Christ was to show that God so loved the world, notwithstanding the sins of the world, that he sent his best beloved child, the noblest and purest being whom he had ever put upon this earth, and allowed him to suffer and to die, in order to show to man his strong forgiving love. Through Christ has come into the world the sense of the forgiving love of God. There is something wonderful in self-sacrifice. When the good and the noble, instead of seeking their own exaltation and their own happiness, devote themselves to the rescue and the help of those who are below them spiritually and morally, and go down even willingly to die that these may be saved, there is a power which goes forth from that voluntary self-sacrifice, — a manifestation of love, which is the most convincing proof of the divine love of the world: God's love shines through it to man, and the influence of that love is always vast. It is the same power

which has been always exerted by the martyrs in all ages The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Only the power increases in proportion to the elevation of character of the being who gives himself for others. That Christ, instead of seeking his own glory, or wishing to enjoy the rewards of all his holiness and goodness in the heavenly world, should have devoted himself here to sinful men and lived only for the sake of helping others,—that was what astonished the Apostles in the beginning, and it was the theme of their preaching. "Let this mind be in you," says the Apostle, "which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God" (being a manifestation of the divine holiness and goodness, one with the Father in his holy spirit) "did not think this God-likeness a thing to be eagerly grasped;" ("thought it not robbery to be equal with God," is our translation. The meaning is that he did not go forward and say, "I am like God; look at me; see the magnificence of my position and character") Instead of doing that, what did Jesus do? He humbled himself, made himself like a servant, and being found in the fashion of a servant, came to help and serve others. He submitted himself to the death of the cross, the most degrading death of all, in order to help man; "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Now that was the power which came from Christ, the reconciling power. It makes us feel the truth of what he says when he tells us that we must be like our Father in heaven, not to return evil with evil, but to overcome evil with good. That is the only way in which evil can be overcome, namely, by good. You can resist evil with evil. By means of force, by prisons and the gallows, you can prevent evil from becoming very much worse. You can keep it back, you can keep it down, by force; but you cannot cure it except by goodness, by the manifestation of superior love. And

that is the power of Christ. With this power Christ overcomes evil with good, and we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son whenever we see in that death the sign of infinite tenderness in our behalf. God is like the father in the parable, ready, whenever we repent, to receive us with open arms and take us back to his fatherly heart. When we can live in that belief, then we are reconciled to God. When we can maintain that faith in God, then we live in perpetual communion with him, and when we are in communion with God we can have peace. And I do not believe with Mr. Cook, that then there still remains any thing unsatisfied, any thing which needs that something more be done. It is enough for us if we are one with our Heavenly Father.

The greatest moral difficulty we ourselves meet with is that of reconciling justice and mercy, truth and love. Almost all the cases of conscience which present real difficulties in daily life emerge from some conflict between our obligations to truth and our obligations to love. A beggar comes to you with a pathetic story. Love says, "Help him," Truth says, "No: you will do more harm than good." Sympathy is on one side; principle, on the other. You go to see a friend dangerously ill. The sick friend asks whether you think he will recover. You have been ordered by the physician not to let him know how sick he is; so what will you do? Tell a lie, and be false to yourself? or tell the truth, and deprive him perhaps of his last chance of recovery? This is the eternal ethical conflict in the human mind. We naturally transfer this conflict to the mind of God and imagine the Almighty considering how *he* can forgive sin without violating the law of justice. It is out of this supposed antagonism in God's mind derived from our own, that the various doctrines of the Atonement have arisen. But now Jesus comes; and in his life, as well as in his death, we find the

harmony between Truth and Love complete. In him Mercy and Truth have met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other. Though no one ever felt more deeply the evil of sin, no one was ever more tender to the sinner than he. And if we consider him, the highest being the world has known, to be the best illustration of the divine character, we see that God can also be just, and yet the justifier of those who believe in him, and trust themselves to his divine grace. So that Dr. Livingston was eminently right when he wrote in one of his latest journals: "What is the atonement of Christ but Christ himself? Is it not the whole character of Christ, his whole life and death and character, showing the infinite love of God to all his children, and drawing all to himself, not by fear, but by goodness?" Christ himself is the all-convincing proof that there is no such conflict as we imagine between justice and mercy, but that a perfectly holy being may also be perfectly ready to forgive the penitent.

The Atonement then is this, that Christ shows us, convincingly, that the Divine Justice and the Divine Love are at one. He does not *make* them to be at one; but he manifests their harmony. He shows how natural and simple it is for God to forgive every penitent sinner, as soon as he is ready to be forgiven. When we hear him saying, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more," we hear God saying it. He who has seen him has seen the Father, for he is full of the spirit of his Father. This is his true and glorious divinity; not to be the mysterious incarnation of some inexplicable "subsistence," but to be the perpetual spiritual manifestation of the Father's truth and the Father's love. He is the eternal word made flesh and dwelling among us, — the everlasting spiritual revelation of the Divine Truth and Love. So, being at one with God, he makes us also at one with

God. For he came, and lived, and died for this, — that all those who believe in his truth may become at one with God, as he was at one with God. There is no other atonement that will help us. The only place in the New Testament where the word "atonement" is found, says of Jesus — "by whom we have now received the atonement." Unless we receive the atonement, and are ourselves made at one with God, the atonement of Jesus will be of no use to us.

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[No. 24]

INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

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The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and wpward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

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(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

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INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

BY JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

SECT. 1. — *Question Stated.*

THE question we propose to ask is this: What reason have we for believing that the books of the New Testament (consisting of five histories, twenty-one letters, and one allegorical treatise on future events) were written by men who had received a special illumination from God? What reason is there for believing, that they were *not* written, like other books, by men of genius, industry, and reflection, in the natural exercise of these powers? If thus illuminated, what was the kind of illumination, and what its extent? And, lastly, what kind of authority do these writings possess in consequence? what is their relation to human reason, to Church authority, and to universal experience, — that is, shall we justify the views of the rationalist, the churchman, or the spiritualist?

This is the main question of inspiration, stated distinctly. It divides itself into three: *First*, Is there reason to believe that these Scriptures were composed *under any peculiar inspiration? Second*, What is its character and amount? *Third*, What should be its influence on the formation of our religious belief?

SECT. 2. — *Importance of the Question.*

This question is important, because high views of inspiration tend to produce bibliolatry (Coleridge), or a superstitious reverence for the letter of Scripture; and low views tend to weaken our interest in these writings as sources of positive religious truth. In the formation of opinions also, it is of especial importance to decide the degree of confidence to be placed in the declarations of these Scriptures. To decide what part is human and what divine; what part of these utterances came from the indwelling spirit of truth, and what part from the human limitations of the writers; and by what rule we can distinguish between the divine truth and the human error, ignorance, and prejudice, — this is of primary importance to us in the investigation of Christian truth. This question necessarily precedes all others. In determining the amount of evidence for or against any doctrine of belief or rule of action, we must know what weight to attach to such passages of Scripture as bear upon the doctrine or duty.

SECT. 3 — *State of Opinions concerning Inspiration.*

Upon few subjects of theology are opinions so fluctuating and uncertain as upon this. On one extreme stands the doctrine of inspiration maintained by Gaussen (translated by Edward N. Kirk, D.D.), who asserts that every word contained in the Bible was communicated by inspiration, and contains infallible truth. On the other extreme is the view (represented in this country by the author of the "Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion"), that the writers of the New Testament were no otherwise inspired than good and wise men always are, and that

their writings are full of errors both of fact and principle. These two doctrines are definite and perfectly intelligible; and, adopting either, we have no difficulty in applying it. Adopt the first, and reason, conscience, observation, experience, must all yield to the letter of Scripture: adopt the second, and you may set aside as puerile, false, or wicked, any assertion or command of Scripture which does not suit your opinions, tastes, or prejudices.

But between these two doctrines there is a vast mass of floating opinion, difficult to define or fix. Some say, the "Bible is not a revelation, but the record of a revelation." Some say, "the thoughts were suggested, but not the words." Others contend for what they call an inspiration of superintendence; that is, the writers were watched, and restrained if they were going astray, — an inspiration like the warnings which Socrates received from his demon, who never told him what to do, but only checked him from doing wrong. Some say, "Parts of the Bible are inspired, others not, — Paul was not inspired to send for his cloak, nor David to curse his enemies." Others say, "There are degrees of inspiration: all parts are inspired, but some in a greater and some in a less degree." Bishop Marsh thinks a man may believe in the truth of the religion who does not believe in the inspiration of the record. Grotius says, "It was not necessary that the historical part of the Bible should be dictated by the Holy Spirit: it was only necessary that the writers should possess a good memory." Marsh thinks we should be gainers, if we considered the evangelists as not inspired at all; for then their testimony would be more valuable as witnesses: but the writers of the Epistles must have been inspired. Some Catholics have contended that the writers of some books were not inspired, but the Holy Spirit made these books Holy Scripture, *after they were*

written, by testifying (through the Church) that there is nothing false in them. Milman thinks that the inflexible love of truth of a true Christian would be a sufficient guarantee of his fidelity as a writer.

The extreme positions of those who contend for a plenary inspiration of every word, and of those who deny all peculiar inspiration, seem to be perfectly intelligible, definite, and clear; but untenable. The positions of those who stand between these points is often more reasonable, but vacillating, and not precise.

The source of this difficulty is twofold: first, in the *method of inquiry* usually pursued; second, in the absence of a precise idea of inspiration in its essential nature.

We will, then, first seek a better method of inquiry; and, second, seek a clear idea of the nature of inspiration.

Sect. 4. — *Method of Inquiry.*

The true inductive method of study is, first, to collect the facts; then, to see what theories will explain them. According to this method, we should ask, —

1st, What are the facts which show that the writers of the New Testament were inspired?

2d, What are the theories of the nature and extent of inspiration, which have been adopted to explain these facts? Are they satisfactory or defective? and, if so, how?

3d, Can a better theory be found?

But the usual method of inquiry has been quite different. Usually, it has been first assumed or argued that some particular kind of inspiration is necessary, in order that our faith should have a sufficient and a firm foundation. Then, the *necessity* of inspiration being established, a *theory* of inspiration is sought which should meet and

satisfy this necessity. Lastly, facts and arguments are sought to establish this theory.

No satisfactory result can be obtained by such a method of inquiry. With what candor or caution can we examine facts, while we believe the whole of Christian faith is in peril, if a certain theory is not established? To assume the truth of a theory on *a priori* grounds, and then look for facts to sustain it, is the sure way to introduce error and falsehood into any branch of knowledge.

The method of Gaussen is still more erroneous and objectionable. He begins by stating the theory of inspiration which he means to defend; namely, that of the plenary verbal inspiration of the whole Bible. He then proceeds to examine the usual objections to this doctrine; thirdly, to refute other theories of inspiration; fourthly, to inquire for the true place and office of sacred criticism; after this, he sums up all his views in the form of a catechism; and, finally, he proceeds to prove them. These proofs occupy about fifty pages at the close of the book, the three hundred previous pages having been devoted to stating his theory, and arguing against the theories of others. Therefore, Lord Bacon's criticism on Aristotle applies exactly to Gaussen: "He had already decided, without having properly consulted experience as the basis of his decisions and axioms; and, having so decided, he drags experiment along as a captive, constrained to accommodate herself to his decisions."

But before proceeding to test the method which offers better prospects, we will briefly examine the history of the doctrine, which will form the subject of our next section.

Sect. 5. — *History of the Doctrine.*

Before examining a doctrine, it is well to place our minds in an unprejudiced state, by surveying the history of opinions concerning it. We thus command the whole field of inquiry, and lose the narrowness which belongs to those who have only heard one view maintained. When we see how many different forms a doctrine has taken, we cease to be blindly bound to one, and we are better prepared to accept that which shall commend itself as most according to the truth.

1. The ancient religions all taught a plenary inspiration of their prophets, and most of them had their sacred books. The Hindoos believe that the Vedas were given by Brahma; and, after having been preserved by oral tradition for a time, were written down by the wise Vyasa. The Zendavesta declares its substance to have been communicated to Zoroaster by Ormuzd. The Mohammedans maintain that the Koran was communicated to Mohammed, chapter by chapter, from Allah. The Jews believed their law to have been given by Jehovah, through the mediation of angels, to Moses. The Romans regarded with a profound reverence their Sibylline books; and, when they were consulted, the pontifex bowed to them, and did them reverence. The Greeks had no sacred books; but they referred the oracles to an inspiration of the gods, which put thoughts and words together into the mind of the priests. The notion of a plenary inspiration was, therefore, a familiar one to antiquity.

2. The Jews especially believed, not only in the plenary and verbal inspiration of their Scripture, but in the divinity of every letter and mark. Many are the statements in the Talmud to this effect.* For example,

* See Gfrörer, Jahrhundert des Heils.

we read that "the book of Deuteronomy came and prostrated itself before God, and said, 'O Lord of the Universe! in me you have written your law. Behold now, Solomon wishes to remove Yod (from Deut. xvii. 17, 'He shall not multiply wives') from me.' Jehovah answered, 'Solomon, and a thousand like him, shall perish; but a vowel shall not perish from thee.'" Jesus refers to these notions: "Not a jot or a tittle of the law shall pass, till all be fulfilled." (The "jot" or "iota" is the Hebrew *ayin*, the smallest letter of the alphabet; and the "tittle," or *keraia*, is the apex or corner of the letter, such, for instance, as distinguishes *Daleth* from *Resh*. So the Rabbins say, "If any one should change *Daleth* into *Resh*, in Deut. vi. 4, he would shake the universe." It would be changing the word *God* into the word *idol*.)

3. In accordance with these ideas, the Jews have always had a scrupulous care in transcribing their Scriptures. Butler, in his "Horæ Biblicæ," says, "It has been a constant rule with them, that any copy which is considered corrupt shall not be used, but be destroyed. A book is corrupt which wants *one letter*, or has *one too many;* which is written with any thing but ink, or written on parchment made of the skin of an unclean animal, or not purposely prepared for that use, or prepared by any but an Israelite, or on skins tied together by unclean skins. No word shall be written without a line first drawn on the parchment; no word written without being first orally pronounced; before writing the name of God, the pen shall be washed; no letter be joined to another; blank parchment shall be seen round each letter. If any of these rules are not observed, the whole book is corrupt, and must be destroyed.

4. Since the Jews, at the time of Jesus, entertained such a reverence for the letter of their Scriptures, it is no won-

der that a like feeling soon attached itself also to the New Testament. The oldest Church Fathers regarded it as inspired by the Divine Logos, even in the historical parts.* But then, the ante-Nicene Fathers extended this inspiration to heathen writers also.† Tertullian believed every edifying scripture, sacred or profane, to be inspired, reading the famous passage in Timothy, "All scripture, which is profitable for doctrine, &c., is given by inspiration."‡ Among the writings to which a more special inspiration was ascribed, were included the shepherd Hermas and the Sibylline oracles. The oldest writers perceived and felt the difficulty arising from the fact, that the evangelists did not appeal to the Holy Spirit as the source of their knowledge. In the first centuries, therefore, the tendency was strong toward a Platonic view of inspiration, in which the human activity is suppressed, and the writer becomes an unconscious instrument of God. And yet, very inconsistent and fluctuating views prevailed also, some of which leaned toward the opposite extreme of rationalism.

5. The writers of the middle ages continued to think thus variously concerning inspiration down to the Reformation. Hase, Wegscheider, and other writers, quote passages from Abelard and others, in which they speak with contempt of the doctrine of a verbal inspiration. Jerome considered the New Testament full of Hebraisms and solecisms in style. Erasmus, just before the Reformation, said of the writers of the Bible, "They were only men; they were ignorant of some things, they erred in others."

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* See the evidence in Strauss, "Christliche Glaubenslehre."

† See quotations in Hase, "Dogmatic," from Theoph. Clemens Alex and Tertullian.

‡ De Cultu Femm. c. 3: "Legimus omnem scripturam ædificationi habilem divinitus inspirari."

6. Luther, a perfectly free mind, showed his independence here as in every thing else. The Scripture he loved as his own life; but he held to no extravagant theory of inspiration. His rule was simple: "To know if a book is inspired, see if it preaches Christ. That which does not, is *not* inspired, though Peter or Paul wrote it; that which does, *is* inspired, though written by Judas, Caiaphas, Pilate, or Herod."

Luther, it is well known, thought the later prophets copied from the earlier; thought some parts of the New Testament had a much higher value than other parts preferred John's Gospel to those of the Synoptics; called James's Epistle "a strawy" one, having more chaff than wheat; and said of one of Paul's arguments in Galatians (iv. 25), that it was "too weak to hold." But just so Jerome had said of another argument in the same epistle (iii. 16), that it had no force, "but yet was good enough for the foolish Galatians." And both Luther and Jerome would nevertheless sometimes argue in the manner of those who hold to the strongest view of plenary inspiration.

7. But, as the Protestant divines now relinquished tradition as a source of truth, and relied wholly on the Bible, it soon became orthodox to believe in the plenary, verbal, literal, and equal inspiration of every part of the canon. The history of the progress of opinions, from this period, becomes so very interesting and important that we shall continue it in our next section.

Sect. 6. — *Later History of the Doctrine.*

We have traced the history of the doctrine to the Reformation. We shall now see, that the inspiration of the Bible, in every word and letter, became a matter of life

and death with Protestant theologians. If we are saved by faith, and if faith means the belief of propositions, then we cannot be saved unless we certainly know what these propositions are. Thus far the Roman Church and the Protestant Church agree: they agree further in asserting the necessity of an external authority, an infallible guide, that we may know what to believe. This infallible guide the Roman Catholic possesses in his Church. The Protestant denies the infallibility of the Church. To him the only infallible guide possible is the Bible. It became inevitable, therefore, for Protestants to assert the infallibility of the Bible.

Protestant theologians, therefore, after Luther, taught that the writers of the Bible were (1) moved by the Holy Spirit to write (*impulsus ad scribendum*); that (2) the topics they were to communicate were given them by the Holy Spirit (*suggestio rerum*); and (3) that the words they chose were pointed out by a like inspiration (*suggestio verborum*). All was inspired, — words and things; history, geography, morality; what they knew before, and what they did not know. The apostolic writers and their assistants were even called "God's amanuenses," and "notaries or secretaries of the Holy Ghost." They said that God used them as tongues to speak with, pens to write with. God, then, is the only author of the Bible; and, if the different books correspond in style and expression to the circumstances of the writers, it is because the Holy Ghost has seen fit to choose such expressions as they themselves would have chosen, if left to themselves.

2. But it had been remarked long since, that all of the Old Testament was not written in pure Hebrew, nor all of the New Testament in pure Greek. Jerome had spoken of barbarisms and solecisms in the Bible; but, according to the new Protestant theory of verbal inspiration, this

would be accusing God of *choosing* barbarous and ungrammatical expressions. Nothing remained but to deny that there were any such, which was accordingly done. The most subtle distinctions and daring assertions were resorted to, and it was boldly denied that any such defects of style were to be found in the Bible.

3. This was not all. Words consist of letters; and, if words are inspired, the letters must be also inspired. But criticism had shown that the Hebrew points or vowels in the Old Testament were not nearly as old as the text, but were added by the Rabbins in later times. Therefore, it was argued, as the consonant is the body, and the vowel the soul, of the word, and the soul as well as body must have come from God, the vowel-points were also inspired; and some of the later symbols (or creeds) roundly declared that they were as old as the consonants.

4. But the dangers to be encountered from criticism were just commencing. Suppose the words were given by inspiration, letters and all, how do we know we have the original words? We have not the original MSS., but only copies of copies; who is to answer for the fidelity and accuracy of the copyist? In fact, the MSS. now extant were found on examination to differ greatly; and Mill, Wetstein, and others discovered tens and hundreds of thousands of variations in words and letters. The teachers of verbal inspiration, therefore, must do one of two things, — they must either assert that some one particular text (the received text for example) was preserved from error by a constant miracle; or the theory must be given up, and the want of infallibility admitted. But they did neither one nor the other, but denied the fact of there being any various readings, or any of consequence, and looked very angrily upon the critics for maintaining the contrary.

5. But criticism, investigation, inquiry, pursue their way, and cannot be checked by bold denials or loud clamors. There are difficulties in the way of the theory of verbal inspiration which cannot be overcome. The eighteenth century was given up to analysis, criticism, and denial; and, among other things, the assertions of the theologians of the seventeenth century were examined and denied. The doctrine of verbal inspiration was gradually but very generally relinquished; but no other theory took its place, and the whole state of opinion became vague and indefinite, as we have shown in a previous section.

As an example of this uncertainty, we may refer to Michaelis, who, in his Introduction to the New Testament (translated by Bishop Marsh), contends that the apostles are inspired, and what they wrote inspired too. "But," says he, "what shall we do with the books *not written by the apostles*, as the Gospels of Mark and Luke?

"I must confess I am unable to find a satisfactory proof of their inspiration; and the more I investigate the subject, and the oftener I compare their writings with those of Matthew and John, the greater are my doubts. In the third edition of this work, I delivered the arguments for and against their inspiration with a degree of uncertainty which side of the question I should prefer, though rather inclined to the affirmative. At present, though I shall deliver my sentiments with the same cautious uncertainty as before, I am strongly inclined to the negative."

So, while our salvation was made to depend on right opinions, and the holding right opinions depended on our having an infallible teacher in the Bible, the most learned theologians of the last century were quite uncertain whether two of the evangelists were inspired or not!

6. At the present time, as we have seen, a very great uncertainty prevails among Protestant theologians upon

this subject. In sermons and exhortations, the Bible is quoted in all its parts as the Word of God, but few define what they mean by this expression. Leading Orthodox theologians in Germany, as Neander and Twesten, decidedly reject the doctrine of verbal inspiration. In England and the United States, many follow Coleridge to the same conclusions.

SECT. 7. — *Proofs of a Special Inspiration.*

The question we have now reached, after our preliminary discussion, is this: "Is there any special or peculiar inspiration to be ascribed to the New-Testament writers? Do these books differ essentially from other products of human genius? What reason have we for thinking that they were more inspired than the writings of Plato, Seneca, Augustine, Zoroaster, or Confucius?"

Let us first define the term "inspiration."

1. We do not say that the writers of the New Testament were inspired *to write books*, but that those books were written by inspired men. It is the man who was inspired, and not the book. Nor is the man inspired as a writer, but as a man. The distinction betweeen revelation and inspiration is modern, and was first made ince the Reformation; and is rejected by recent writers of standing, both Orthodox and Liberal.*

2. We do not say that the writers of the New Testament were infallible. Infallibility is one thing, inspiration is another. One may, indeed, be infallibly inspired

* "Revelation and inspiration are, according to the Scripture, not essentially different. The school theory, therefore, which has prevailed since the seventeenth century, which arbitrarily distinguishes between them, is foreign from the Scripture views." — *Hahn, Lehr. des Christ. Glaub.*, § 24.

but one may also be inspired without being infallible. He may have truth of a higher order set before his mind in a supernatural manner; but in reducing it to thoughts, and reporting it in language, he may mix his own opinions and weaknesses with it.

3. We assert that one may become an *authority* without being infallible. He who has peculiar opportunities of knowledge becomes an authority to others. A traveller from China is an authority (in matters relating to China) to those who have not been there, though no one deems him infallible. Yet wiser men than himself defer to his statements because he has been where they have not been. We may assert that the writers of the New Testament have been where we have not been. We may say that they were placed by an inward influence on a higher plane of insight, so as to see spiritual facts and laws which we do not see.

4. Not that they tell us things never told before. Their statements are as old as truth, as old as humanity. They tell us what has been guessed at, suspected, hoped, and believed, by thousands. But what others have *thought*, they have *seen;* what others report as opinions, they report as facts; what others give as their thoughts, they give as their testimony. They have not opined these things, but have seen and heard them.

5. The evidence of this is to be found, first, in their writings. Taking the undoubted writings of Paul and the other apostles, and neglecting, for the present, the Gospels, we notice that —

6. The *height* and *depth* of their insight indicates a peculiar inspiration. We give a single example, taken at random. When Socrates was condemned to die, a friend said "What I mourn for, Socrates, is the injustice with which they treat you." — "What!" said Socrates, "would you prefer that I should suffer justly?"

Peter says, in his first Epistle, "It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, rather than for evil doing." — "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye."

We have here the same noble thought uttered by Socrates and by Peter. But Socrates was a man of genius, royally endowed by nature: such as appears only once in many thousand years. Peter was not a man of genius; for we see no evidence of any peculiar natural endowment in him, or in James and John, before the resurrection. Nor do great geniuses go in groups, to be gathered, two or three at a time, out of a crowd of Galilean fishermen. The proof of inspiration is not that these writers say better things than had ever been said before, but *that these unlettered men, rude in intellect and of poor endowment, should be all so changed, by some influence, as that their familiar and extemporaneous speech and writing should abound with the same lofty sentiments and profound thoughts which have been admired and preserved for thousands of years, when uttered in rare moments by the select geniuses of the earth.*

7. The *living harmony of their opinions* indicates a peculiar inspiration.

By studying the ideas and opinions of these writers, we shall see that they have an organic relation to each other. Their minds are penetrated, through and through, by the actual truth; and all their thoughts are polarized by it. In most men we find inconsistency and incoherence. The grasp of thought breaks down somewhere; and some of their opinions are accidental or hereditary, having no binding coherence with the rest. But, in the minds of these writers, all opinions have a moral significance, a relation to central truths. This indicates an interior, organizing principle of life, out of which their thoughts grow. This

coherence cannot in their case come from philosophic reflection, for of this there is no trace: it must come, then, from a living insight; that is, an inspiration.*

8. But it sometimes happens, that narrow men (men of one idea, as we call them) are comparatively consistent in their opinions: they see but one side of truth, and therefore can easily bring all their thoughts into harmony with it. But the New-Testament writers are remarkable for the width of their view, for the range of their thought. They recognize fully all the antagonist facts of the spiritual life. They give both sides of every question. They teach human freedom and divine providence; they teach that salvation is a gift and a reward; they recognize the truths in monotheism and in pantheism, in naturalism and supernaturalism. This breadth of view, which causes their writings to be appealed to by all sects and parties, and to furnish arguments to all schools of thinkers, is a manifest proof that they stood at the centre of spiritual life and light, whence these rays of truth issue in opposite directions.

9. It would confirm our conviction of the fact of their special inspiration, were we to compare the writings of the New Testament with other sacred books, as the writings of Confucius and Mencius, with the Vedas and Puranas, with the Zendavesta and the Koran. The peculiarity of the New Testament would then appear to be a greater clearness, sweep, and depth of insight, but especially a more practical, solid, and substantial character of knowledge.

10. Looking now to see what account these writings themselves give of the inspiration of their writers, we find

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* To show the truth of the statements in this and the previous paragraphs, many pages would be necessary. But in this direction, we are persuaded, lies the strongest proof of inspiration.

it nowhere asserted that they were inspired to write, but everywhere that they, like all their fellow-disciples, were inspired men.

(*a*) Jesus announces the Holy Spirit which he is to send to lead his disciples into all truth, in John xiv. xv., and xvi.

(*b*) In Acts ii., and elsewhere, we have an account of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and of the coming of the same spirit upon all who were baptized, and became Christians.

(*c*) In the Epistles, it is everywhere asserted and assumed, that the whole body of Christians are inspired by the Holy Spirit.

11. The objections urged against this view are mostly against an inspiration of infallibility. It is said that these writers contradict each other in unessential particulars, — that they were ignorant of some things, and mistaken as to others. All this may be, and yet not disprove our assertion, that they possessed a peculiar inspiration, not resulting from natural genius, but from a special divine influence, which placed them on a higher plane of insight, and enabled them to become authorities on matters of religious truth to men wiser than themselves in other respects.

12. In concluding this part of the argument, we say, that, if with the aid of these hints we study the New-Testament writings, we shall find in them a fulness of thought, and be convinced that the Spirit of the Lord has given them a marvellous liberty, fidelity, and insight. And we shall listen to them as to those who have been where we have not been, and seen what we have not seen; and so possess an authority over our wills, which yet is quite different from infallibility.

SECT. 8. — *Inspiration not Infallible nor Verbal.**

The doctrine of the plenary inspiration of Scripture, after having been nearly abandoned by theologians, has lately been reproduced in its grossest form by Gaussen and his American translator, Rev. Mr. Kirk.

Inspiration, as defined by Gaussen, is "that inexplicable power which the Divine Spirit formerly exercised over the authors of the Holy Scriptures, to guide them even in the employment of the words they were to use, and to preserve them from all error, as well as from every omission."

"We aim," says he, "to establish, by the word of God, that the Scriptures are from God, that all the Scriptures are from God, and that every part of the Scripture is from God."

Let us consider the arguments in support of this kind of inspiration, and the objections to them.

I. — Plenary inspiration is *necessary*, that we may know with certainty what we ought to believe.

Great stress is laid upon this supposed *necessity* both by Gaussen and Kirk.

"The book so written," say they, "is the word of God, and binds the conscience of the world; and nothing else does so bind it, even though it were the writings of Paul and Peter.

"With the infidel, whether he be Christian in name or otherwise, the sharp sword of a perfect inspiration will be found at last indispensable. If the ground is conceded to him, that there is a single passage in the Bible that is not divine, then we are disarmed; for he will be sure to apply this privilege to the very passages which most fully oppose

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* This section is also printed in the Appendix to "Orthodoxy; its Truths and Errors."

his pride, passion, and error. How is the conscience of a wicked race to be bound down by a chain, one link of which is weak?"

We may reply, that, to assume the necessity of a theory, does not prove its truth. The only legitimate proof of a theory is by an induction of facts. This method of beginning by a supposed necessity, this looking first at consequences, has always been fruitful of false and empty theories. The great advance in modern science has come from substituting the inductive for the ideological method. Find what the facts say, and the consequences will take care of themselves. An argument from consequences is usually only an appeal to prejudices.

Again: This argument is fatal to the arguments drawn from the Scriptures themselves. In arguing from the Scripture to prove that every passage is divine, we have of course, no right to *assume* that every passage is divine, for that is the very thing to be proved. Then the texts which we quote to prove our position may themselves not be divine; and, if we grant that, "we are disarmed." For, according to this argument, nothing can be proved conclusively from Scripture unless we believe in plenary inspiration: then plenary inspiration itself cannot be proved from Scripture. But Gaussen admits, that this doctrine can be proved "only by the Scriptures;" therefore (according to this argument) it cannot be proved at all.

If, therefore, the doctrine of plenary inspiration is necessary "to bind the conscience of the world," it is a doctrine incapable of proof. If, on the other hand, it can be proved, it is then clearly not necessary "to bind the conscience of the world."

But again: This theory of plenary inspiration does *not* bind the consciences of men. If men are naturally disposed (as Messrs. Gaussen and Kirk maintain) to deny

and disbelieve the doctrines and statements of the Bible, they have ample opportunity of doing so, notwithstanding their belief in this theory. For, after admitting that the words of Scripture, just as they stand, are perfectly true and given by God, the question comes, What do they mean? For instance, I wish, we will suppose, to deny the doctrine of the Deity of Christ. Now, you quote to me the text, Rom. ix. 5: "Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever," which is the strongest text in the Bible in support of that doctrine. Now, though I believe in the doctrine of plenary inspiration, I am not obliged to accept this passage as proof of the Deity of Christ. For, I can — 1. Assert that the verse is an interpolation; 2. Assert that it is wrongly pointed; 3. Assert that it is mistranslated; 4. Assert that Christ is called God in an inferior sense, as God over the Church. And, as a matter of fact, these are the arguments always used, even by those who deny the doctrine of a plenary inspiration. They seldom or never accuse the writer of a mistake, but always rely on a supposed mistranslation or misinterpretation, in order to avoid the force of a passage. Hence, also, we find believers in this doctrine of plenary inspiration differing in opinion on a thousand matters, and with no probability of ever coming to an agreement.

II. — It is argued that many passages of the New Testament plainly teach the doctrine of the plenary inspiration of the Bible.

The passages quoted by Gaussen, and mainly relied upon, are 2 Tim. iii. 16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration," &c.; 2 Pet. i. 27, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved," &c. Besides these, he refers to many texts in the Old and New Testaments; but his chief stress is laid on these.

But in reply we may say that these passages refer only to the Old-Testament Scriptures. It is well known that the first may be translated so as to read, "All Scripture, given by inspiration, is profitable," &c. But it is reply enough to both these passages to say, that neither of them indicates what kind of inspiration is intended. They assert an inspiration, which we also maintain. But they do *not* assert a verbal inspiration, nor one which makes the Scriptures *infallible*, but simply one which makes them *profitable*.

The stress laid on the passage, 2 Tim. iii. 16, "All Scripture," &c., is itself an argument against the theory of plenary inspiration. The most which can be made of this text by *any* punctuation or translation, is, that all the Scripture is written by inspired men. What was the degree or kind of their inspiration is not in the least indicated It might have been verbal, it might have been the inspiration of suggestion or of superintendence, or the general inspiration of all Christians.

Gaussen's only argument on this point is, "that it is the *writing* which is said to be inspired, and writing must be in words; hence the inspiration must be verbal." To this we must reply, that inspired writing can only mean what is written by inspired men. The writing itself cannot be inspired. This argument is too flimsy to be dwelt upon.

But further still: there is another argument which lies against every attempt to prove plenary inspiration out of the Scripture. *Every such attempt is necessarily reasoning in a circle.* Gaussen and Kirk have labored earnestly to reply to this argument, but in vain. The answer they make is, "We are not reasoning with infidels, but with Christians. We address men who respect the Scriptures, and who admit their truth.

"The Scriptures are inspired, we affirm, because, being authentic and true, they declare themselves inspired; and the Scriptures are plenarily inspired, because, being inspired, they say that they are so totally and without any exception."

But we answer Messrs. Gaussen and Kirk thus:—"You are indeed reasoning with Christians, not with Deists; but you are reasoning with Christians who do not believe that *every passage* of Scripture is infallibly inspired. To prove your doctrine from any particular passages or verbal expressions, you must prove that those particular passages and expressions are not themselves errors. You yourselves assert that this cannot be done, except we believe these passages to be infallibly inspired. Therefore you must assume infallible inspiration in order to prove infallible inspiration. In other words, you beg the question instead of arguing it."

In this vicious circle, the advocates of a verbal inspiration of infallibility are necessarily imprisoned whenever they attempt to argue from the words of Scripture. They contend that one must believe their theory in order to be sure that any passage is absolutely true; and then they quote passages to prove their theory, as if they were absolutely true.

III. — The theory of plenary inspiration, it is said, is simple, precise, intelligible, and easy to be applied.

We admit this to be true. It has this merit in common with the opposite theory of no inspiration. Both are simple, precise, and very easy of application. But simplicity is not always a sign of truth. The facts of nature and life are more apt to be complex than simple. Theories distinguished by their simplicity most commonly ignore or omit a part of the facts. Simplistic theories are generally one-sided and partial. Materialism, atheism, idealism, fatal

ism, are all very simple theories, and explain all difficulties with a marvellous rapidity. This makes them, at first, attractive to the intellect, which always loves clear and distinct views; but afterward, when it is seen that they obtain clearness by means of shallowness, they are found unsatisfactory.

IV. — The quotations from the Old Testament, by Jesus and his apostles, show that they regarded its language as infallibly inspired.

This argument, upon which great stress is laid both by Prof. Gaussen and Mr. Kirk, though plausible at first sight, becomes wholly untenable on examination.

Thus, in the temptation of Jesus, in his reply to the tempter, he says, "Thou shalt not live by bread alone;" the whole force of the argument is said to depend on the single word "alone."

Replying to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, he says, "Have ye not read that God says, I *am* the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Here the whole stress of the argument is said to rest on the use of the verb in the present tense, "I am."

Arguing with the Pharisees: "How did David, by the Spirit, call him *Lord*, saying, The Lord said to my Lord, &c.?" Here the argument depends on the use of the single word, "Lord."

Many more instances could be produced of the same kind; and Gaussen contends, that when Jesus and his apostles thus rest their argument on the force of a single word of the Old Testament, they must have believed that the very words were given by inspiration. For otherwise the writers might have not chosen the right word to express their thought in each particular case. And, unless the Jews had also believed in the verbal inspiration of

their Scriptures, they would have replied that these particular words might have been errors.

Plausible as this argument may seem, it turns out to be wholly empty and worthless. Whenever any writer is admitted to be an authority, then his words become authoritative, and arguments are necessarily based on single words and expressions. In all such cases, we assume that he chose the best words by which to convey his thought, and yet we do not ascribe to him any inspiration or infallibility.

Thus, go into our courts of law, and you will hear the language of the United-States Constitution, of the acts of legislature, of previous decisions of the courts, argued from, word by word. Counsel argue by the hour upon the force and weight of single words in the authorities. Judges in their charges instruct the jury to determine the life and death of the criminal according to the letter of the law. And this they do, necessarily, according to the rule, "Cum recedit a litera, judex transit in legislatorem." But will any one maintain, that the counsel and court believe that the legislature was infallibly inspired to choose the very language which would convey their meaning?

In this very argument for plenary inspiration, Gaussen and his associates rest their argument on the single word "all," in the text, "All Scripture is given by inspiration," &c. Yet, say they, we are not assuming that this text is plenarily inspired; for that, we admit, would be begging the question. If, then, Mr. Gaussen can argue from the force of the single word *all*, without assuming the doctrine of plenary inspiration, why could not Jesus and his apostles argue from single words, without assuming the doctrine of plenary inspiration?

There is, however, a passage in Paul (Gal. iii. 16), in which the apostle quotes a text from the Old Testament,

and lays the whole stress of his argument on two letters "He says not, 'And to seeds' (σπέρμασιν), as of many, but as of one, 'And to thy seed' (σπερματι)." According to Gaussen's argument, Paul must have believed in the inspiration of the letters. But Gaussen is careful not to ad duce this instance, which seems at first so much in his favor. For, in fact, both in Hebrew and Greek, as in English "seed" is a collective noun, and does mean *many* in the singular. The argument of Paul, therefore, falls through; and it is evident that he is no example to be imitated here, in laying stress on one or two letters. Most modern interpreters admit that he made a mistake; and so, among the ancients, did Jerome, who, nevertheless, said the argument "was good enough for the foolish Galatians."

Having thus replied, very briefly, but we believe sufficiently, to the main arguments in support of this theory, we say in conclusion, that it cannot be true, for the following reasons, which we simply state, and do not now attempt to unfold: —

1. The New-Testament writers nowhere claim to be infallibly inspired to write. If they had been infallibly inspired to write the Gospels and Epistles, they certainly ought to have announced this important fact; instead of which, Luke gives as his reason for writing, not that God inspired him to write, but that, "inasmuch as others have taken in hand" to write, it seemed good to him also to do the same, and that for the benefit of Theophilus. John and Paul assert the truth of what they say, but not on account of their being inspired to write, but because they are disciples and apostles.

2. The differences in the accounts of the same transactions show that their inspiration was not verbal.

These differences appear on every page of any Harmony of the New Testament. They are numerous, but

unimportant; they go to prove the truth of the narrative, and give probability to the main Gospel statements. But they utterly disprove the theory of plenary inspiration.

3. Paul declares that some things which he says are "of the Lord," other things "of himself;" that in regard to some things he was inspired, in regard to others not.

4. Every writer in the New Testament has a style of his own, and there is no appearance of his being merely an amanuensis.

5. While the New-Testament writers lay no claim to any such inspiration as this theory assumes, they do claim for themselves, and for all other Christians, another kind of inspiration, which is sufficient for all the facts, and which gives them ample authority over our faith and life, and makes them independent sources of Christian truth.

SECT. 9. — *Another Theory of Inspiration.*

The method we have pursued in this inquiry has been this. We first examined the opinions now existing, and which have formerly been held on the subject. We found reason for thinking that the question was yet not settled, and that a better view than any now prevailing might be attained. We then looked at the facts, at the traits in the New-Testament writings which difference them from other books, and satisfied ourselves that the writers possessed *some* peculiar and special inspiration. We then proceeded to ask what this is; and meeting on our way the common Protestant theory of a verbal inspiration, we examined it, and have found it destitute of support, and on many accounts objectionable. We now ask, Can any better view of inspiration be found? and how will it bear on the authority of the Scriptures, the rights of reason, and the teachings of the Church? And this will close our examination of the subject.

1. We will first consider the capacity in man for inspiration in general. Inspiration, in the largest sense, is an inward sight, — a sight of truth, which we obtain not through the outward organs, but by an inward organ of vision. Many deny that such an inward vision is possible. They say all our knowledge must come from sensation and reflection. But, if so, man is not capable of spiritual religion; for spiritual religion cannot come either by sensation or reflection. Not, surely, by sensation; for the senses only show us outward things, not truths, principles, or ideas. Not by reflection either; for reflection results in propositions believed on grounds of reasoning. But reasoning can only give us probability, not certainty. It does not give us an experience of truth itself; it does not show us the spiritual facts, but only opinions concerning them.

But we know that we can *see* the spiritual laws, and the truths which are above the domain of the understanding. We know that we have sometimes inward experiences of truth, in which we see that justice, holiness, and love are infinitely true, beautiful, and blessed. We have a sight of the things themselves. There are moments in which we draw near to God, and feel his presence and power around us and within us. These moments of insight, of spiritual experience, are all that make us *certain* of any thing. All certain conviction, positive knowledge, living faith in God, justice, goodness, come from such insights as these. They are the foundation of solid piety, of real virtue. All else is imagination, opinion, probability: this is knowledge. By an inward vision, we have a knowledge of the spiritual world, just as by an outward vision we have a knowledge of the material world. If we had no senses by which to perceive the outward world, we could know nothing about it. We

might believe there was such a world on the assurance of our friends, but we could not know it. If we had no senses by which to perceive the inward world, we could not know it; we could only believe in it on the assurance of others.

But to act with energy in any direction, it is necessary to act from knowledge. It is necessary to have a conviction, amounting to certainty, of the reality of the object which is the reason of our action. The more *knowledge* we have of the outward world, the more decision (other things being equal) we shall show in our actions in relation to it. In like manner, the more knowledge we have of God, truth, justice, virtue, the more decision we shall show in our piety and our goodness.

But now one thing more is to be remarked. This certainty or knowledge, whether of outward or inward realities, does not come from a *single* perception. Our senses may deceive us in any one instance. To correct the illusions of the senses, it is necessary to repeat the observation, and by the ear to correct the errors of the eye; by the eye again, those of the ear; by the hand, those of both. Just so, one vision, one inward experience, does not give us certainty. That may have been an illusion, an imagination only. Nor does certainty come even from repeating one kind of spiritual experience. We must exercise *all* our moral faculties to attain a solid assurance of the reality of God, of truth, of goodness.

We must add to the sight of these things a repeated and varied experience of them. We must dwell in love, and so we shall dwell in God. The life is the light of men. Prayer to God gives us confidence in the reality of virtue: active benevolence assures us of the presence of God. Thus a saint, who has spent years in solitary prayer in a hermitage, is beset, after all, with terrible

doubts as to the reality of religion. He calls them temptations of the Devil; but they come because he has not verified his religious experiences by humane action. And so the man of morality or philanthropy, without piety, fears at last that he has wasted his life, and accomplished nothing: his goodness wants life, love, and beauty. There is an inspiration of the heart, of the mind, and of the will; and the one must verify the other. While working for God, and loving God, we know him. While serving man, we are drawn to God. While praying to God, we are drawn to man.

There is, then, a capacity in man for inspiration; that is, for perceiving the awful and beautiful realities of the spiritual world. God is always manifesting these realities to us, in proportion as we, in humility and love, open our souls to receive them. For, to *perceive*, we must *receive*. When we open our eyes, God shows himself to us. When we draw nigh to him, he draws nigh to us. He inspires us, he breathes his truth into us, he brings it in contact with our souls, whenever we sit still and are quiet, and give ourselves up humbly to be led in his way.

2. Thus far we have spoken of inspiration in general. We now ask, in the second place, *What is the peculiarity of Christian inspiration?* What is that special influence which is known as the coming of the Holy Ghost?

The answer of the New Testament is very clear and decided. The Holy Ghost is an inward revelation of Jesus Christ. When Jesus predicts the coming of the Holy Spirit, it is in these remarkable words: "If ye love me, keep my commandments; and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, *for he dwelleth with you*,

and shall be in you." Is not this clearly Christ himself, who dwells *with* thee *now*, and shall be *in* thee hereafter? If there is any doubt of it, read the next words: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; *but ye see* me: because I live, ye shall live also. *At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.*" Directly after, he says, "He that loves me, I will love him, and *will manifest myself unto him.*" Again, he promises that "my Father and I will come and make our abode" with the disciples who love. And again, "*I go away, and come unto you.*" It is true that the Lord speaks in other places of the Comforter as though it were different from himself, as when he says, "I will send you from my Father, and he shall testify of me;" and again he speaks of the Father sending the Comforter *in his name*, i.e., in his spirit or power.

Again: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but, if I depart, I will send him unto you."—"He shall guide you into all truth. For he shall not speak of himself, but what he shall hear he shall speak. He shall receive of mine, and show it unto you." And directly following this: "A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to my Father." It is evident that Jesus speaks somewhat figuratively here, and personifies the Holy Spirit, in order to make them feel the *reality* of this influence more than they otherwise could; for, to prevent misunderstanding, he immediately adds, "*These things I have spoken to you in parables.*" But we may consider this much as certainly intended: 1. That the *Holy Ghost*, or *Christian Inspiration*, makes Christ inwardly present to the soul. 2. That this inspiration is an *influence* which comes primarily from God, as all good influence has its source and

fountain in him. 3. That Christ's active love for them helps to bring this influence to them, which manifests to them both himself and the Father. It is something more than an influence to put *Christian truth* in their souls: it shows them that truth as *living truth* embodied in their Lord. It gives them the sight of the beauty of holiness in him.

Now, all the New Testament corresponds to this view Paul, speaking of his conversion, says, "When it pleased God to reveal his Son *in* me;" and, speaking of the Holy Spirit, says, "The Lord *is the Spirit.*" Christian inspiration, then, is an influence from God, which brings Christ close to our souls, so that we can see God *in him.*

Christian inspiration is being under the personal influence of Christ present to the soul, and manifesting God to the soul. We sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. "I am crucified with Christ, but I live; yet not I, but Christ who liveth in me."

3. And, in the third place, we see, by the Scriptures themselves, that this was the one and only kind of inspiration; and this inspiration all Christians had. It was common to all. There was but one Spirit in the early Church, though it took different forms of manifestation. This is distinctly and explicitly asserted by Paul. "There are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit." — "To one is given by the Spirit the word of *wisdom;* to another, *knowledge*, by the same Spirit; to another, *faith*, by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of *healing*, by the same Spirit; and to others, *miracles*, *prophecy*, *discerning of spirits*, *divers tongues*, *interpretation of tongues.*" All these are specially enumerated; but nothing is said of a separate gift for *writing Scriptures*, still less of a different inspiration for that purpose. We may safely conclude, therefore, that the universal Christian inspiration was adequate for this

end; and that the inspiration of the writers of the Gospels and Epistles was the gift of *wisdom* or of *knowledge*, here specified.

4. And here it is proper to remark, that, as this inspiration of the Holy Ghost was universal in the Church then, and shared by every real Christian, so it is universal in the Church now, and shared by every real Christian now. Paul distinctly asserts, that "no one can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." The reception of the Holy Ghost, at first, was an integral part of Christianity; and what was essential then must be essential always. A man cannot be a real Christian except by a Christian experience, an integral part of which is the reception of the Holy Spirit.

It is true that the *gifts* of the Spirit are not the same now that they were then, for the same gifts are not needed. We do not work physical miracles, nor speak with tongues: these were for signs then, to call attention to Christianity; and, the attention of the world having been called, they are wanted no more. But let them be wanted, and no doubt they would be reproduced again by the living Spirit.

In the apostolic times, the power of the Holy Spirit was more marked and greater than now. The stream of spiritual life was then near its source; it was confined to a narrow channel; it was hemmed in by a more obstinate resistance; and it fell with cataract force from rock to rock. Its foaming waters shone in the sunlight, and its thunder was heard afar. Now it winds more tranquilly along, through meadows and fields, giving fertility to many a mile of cornfields, and bending around the peaceful hills. But it is the same stream then as now. It had more power then, but it has a wider expanse to-day. It broke out in glittering miracles, and strange gifts of speech, in a marvellous insight, in an unrivalled foresight, in forms

adapted to astonish the world, and draw its attention to the new Church. But the Holy Spirit gives life to-day, as at first, to every Christian soul; changes belief into conviction; takes away the heart of stone, and gives a heart of flesh; brings the sinner to repentance; makes the lame in soul to leap as a hart, and he whose tongue was spiritually dumb to sing songs of grateful praise to God.

5. But how, it may be asked, did the Holy Spirit inspire the writers of the New Testament, so as to fit them for their work? What was the "gift of the Spirit" which enabled Luke to write a Gospel, or Paul to write an Epistle?

If we suppose the fundamental fact in this influence to be in every case "*an inward revelation of Christ;*" if this is the one Spirit, the same in all, — then, we may suppose, the separate gifts were developed in each Christian according to his natural and original faculties. To one man, the inward revelation of Christ gives the power of *working miracles*, because he has something in his nature to serve as a basis for that gift. To another, it communicates the power of *speaking with tongues*, because he has a constitutional power of language for its basis. And so of the rest.

Now, let men of a historical turn of mind, as we may suppose Matthew and Luke to have been, to have received this spiritual influence, which lifted them inwardly into communion with Christ, and what would be its effect in developing their historical talent? The love of Christ would give them a profound interest in every fact of his life; it would give a tenfold diligence and fidelity of research, of memory, of accurate statement. Nothing would be trivial or unimportant to them. They would, in the simplicity of their faith and its holy truthfulness, lay aside all prejudice, feeling, passion; and their minds would be

kept full of what Lord Bacon calls "dry light," — that is, pure from emotion or interest. They would make themselves what the evangelists truly are, — perfect mirrors before the facts, to reflect them just as they find them undistorted by private partialities or antipathies. Writing under such an influence, we should have the guarantee of a substantial accuracy in every thing of importance. Where they knew nothing, they would write nothing. They still would not be infallible, but we might be sure they would not err in any thing essential. Their writings would show that they had the WORD OF KNOWLEDGE.

Then how would this view of inspiration apply to the writers of the Epistles? In close intercourse with the mind of Christ, they would see clearly Christian principles, and their application to the wants of the times, and to human life universally. Yet, as each of them by nature would have some ruling tendencies of thought, these would be manifest in their writings. The Spirit would not repress their individualities, but rather develop them. Thus we find the mental peculiarities of Paul, James, John, Peter, all very distinct and manifest in their writings. But it would repress excess and ultraism, give balance of thought, give depth and breadth of view, and cause their words to be weighty with meaning and truth. Their writings would show that to them was given by the Spirit, the WORD OF WISDOM.

6. And now, we ask, What is the position of the New Testament as a source of truth, compared with reason, the Church, and the inward illumination of every Christian?

The New Testament is a source of truth; but that is not its chief office. Its chief value is, that it is a means of bringing men to God. Nevertheless, it is also a source of truth. We go to it for truth; not merely to confirm what we know already, but to show us something new. Protes-

tants ascribe authority to the Scripture, and call it the rule of faith. Now, how does the view of inspiration I have presented, affect the authority of the Scriptures?

I have said that the writers were inspired by a spirit which all true Christians share to-day. But the degree of the early inspiration was much greater than now. It rolled a stronger flood through their souls than through ours. We see this in all the other gifts of the Spirit in apostolic times, — miracles, healings, tongues. We have nothing of the sort now; except, perhaps, some occasional and obscure phenomenon. Therefore there is every reason to believe, that the *word of wisdom* was given in far greater measure then. Their opportunities of knowledge then were far greater than ours. The Spirit lifted them to a nearness to Christ which we do not now attain. This is their authority, then, as we have before said, — the authority of knowledge, of insight, of nearness to the facts and the truths to which they witness. "They speak that they do know, and testify that they have seen." This makes them just what Paul claims for them, "able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter which killeth, but of the spirit which giveth life." — "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." — "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in *the face of Jesus Christ*."

He adds presently, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." It does not make them infallible: they can err, and they did err. Their knowledge increases. Peter, though having received this gift, yet needed a special revelation to teach him to baptize the Gentiles. The authority they have is that of honest men who have seen and known, by a deep inward experience, what they profess to speak

of. This authority even extends to their *language*. They choose the right words to express their meaning. Their words, no less than their thoughts, deserve to be studied; for their thought penetrates into their words. The keener the insight, the more living the thought, so much the more precise *is always* the expression. They speak "not in the words which men's wisdom teacheth, but which the spirit teacheth."

7. "But, if you admit they are not infallible, how shall we distinguish their errors from their truths?" By their own rule. They say, "Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they be of God." The Scriptures are a rule of faith, but not the *only* rule. There are three co-ordinate sources of Christian truth. The same spirit which speaks in the New Testament speaks to the individual soul. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned. *But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.*" We therefore test the SPIRIT IN THE BIBLE by the SPIRIT IN OUR HEARTS.

And the third rule of faith is the SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH. The universal Christian sentiment, the faith and conviction of the Christian Church, is the work of the Holy Spirit. So we test one by the other.

When we doubt whether any thing in the New Testament is a part of inspiration, as we read it there, we compare it with what God says in our soul, and with what he has said in the universal faith of the Christian Church.

When we doubt whether any thing in our own soul is really a divine intuition of truth, we test *that*, first by Scripture, then by the faith of the Church.

When we doubt whether any thing taught by the Church is true, we test that again, first by the Scripture, and second by the Spirit in our own soul.

All this supposes that a man is honestly seeking for Christian truth. But that we must assume in any inquiry concerning the rule of faith. Any rule of faith is a rule only for him who opens his mind honestly to the light, and seeks to know the truth that he may do it.

8. We ask next, What is the relation of this view to the exercise of reason? Suppose we find any thing in the Scripture which seems to us unreasonable, what shall we do? In reply, we make another supposition.

Suppose a friend, in whose honesty and good sense you confide, has been in the heart of Africa, and tells you of what he has seen there. Among his statements is something very strange, which contradicts all your previous opinions. What do you do? *He has been there.* He is not infallible, to be sure; but still your reason is not infallible either. If you are sure that he had good opportunity for observation, you would be likely to conclude that there was something in what he asserts. It would be reasonable to do so. It would have been reasonable for the African prince, who was told water could become solid, to believe it on good testimony, however at first it seemed unreasonable.

The office of reason is to criticise, examine, weigh; it makes us hold back our belief in testimony, until we can really and heartily bestow it.

Our result, then, is, that reason is related to *inspiration* as it is to testimony, to credible testimony of any other kind. Its office is to examine the testimony, to sift it closely; and, if the testimony is sufficient, to accept the new knowledge which is thus offered to the mind.

We cannot, therefore, make our reason a *source* of Christian knowledge. It is not a witness to communicate facts, but an advocate to sift testimony.

Summary.

The conclusions to which we have arrived may be thus summed up: —

1. The opinions which prevail on the inspiration of the Scriptures are either narrow and defective, or vague and indefinite; showing that a revision of the subject is needed.

2. The true method of inquiry is to examine, first, the facts before us; and then to inquire what view of inspiration best arranges and harmonizes those facts.

3. The writings of the New Testament are remarkable for depth, height, and sweep of insight; they are also remarkable for precise thought and luminous expression; also for solidity of substance and weight of experience; and, finally, for living and live-giving energy.

4. When we consider who the writers were, and how they were brought together, we cannot ascribe these qualities in their writings to peculiar genius or culture. There must, then, have been some great influence which acted upon all of them, and gave them the power of thought and utterance.

5. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit which was to come after him. The apostles describe the coming of this Holy Spirit. In this influence all believers shared, but it operated differently on different individuals.

6. The main work of the Holy Spirit was to produce faith in Christ, and to bring believers into an inward and personal relation with him, and putting his gospel into their hearts.

7. By this experience, the writers of the New Testament were not rendered infallible; but they were placed on a higher plane of experience and insight, where they saw truths invisible to those on a lower level.

8. The authority of these writers is that of witnesses, who have been where we have not, and have seen what we have not; and who speak that they do know, and testify that they have seen.

9. The doctrine of an infallible inspiration rests on no basis, and the arguments by which it is supported are wholly unsatisfactory.

10. Nevertheless, all inspiration of thought affects language; and the more clear the insight, the more just will be the expression.

11. There are three sources of Christian knowledge: the New-Testament Scriptures, Christian experience, and the testimony of the Church universal. In seeking Christian truth, we must have recourse to all of these, proving all things, holding fast whatever is good, and abstaining from all that appears evil.

12. The Scriptures are to be reverenced, and handled with deference and love, as the writings of holy men who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. They were nearer the beginning of Christianity than we, nearer the fountain of life; and the more we study their words in an humble and receptive spirit, the more we shall find them profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness.

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[No. 25]

CHRIST

AND

THE CREEDS.

By JOHN C. KIMBALL.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

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CHRIST AND THE CREEDS

THE Creeds say that God is three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that each of these persons is truly God, and that the three together are a trinity in unity.

Christ says, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord;" "There is none good but one, that is God;" "I ascend unto my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God." And Paul, professing to "have the mind of Christ," says, "To us there is but ONE God, the FATHER, of whom are all things, and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

The Creeds teach that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are each to be addressed in worship and prayers, and the Episcopal Litany addresses each in this way.

Christ says, "When thou prayest, pray to thy Father;" "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth;" and "in that day ye shall ask me nothing."

The Creeds say that Christ is equal to the Father. Christ says, "My Father is greater than I."

The Creeds say that Christ is omnipotent. Christ says, "Of mine own self I can do nothing."

The Creeds say that Christ is omniscient. Christ says, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father."

The Creeds say that Christ was one with the Father in a different sense from that in which his disciples were one with each other and one with God.

Christ prays that his disciples may "be one, even as he and the Father are one," and one in God, as he is in the Father and the Father in him.

The Creeds say that Christ has two natures, is God and man combined in one person; and that it is as God that he is mediator, judge, reconciler, a teacher of the truth, a worker of miracles, and the one through whom is the resurrection from the dead; while it is as man that he is ignorant, tempted to sin, and able to do nothing.

Christ uses the word "I" as covering his whole nature, and declares he is "a MAN that hath told you the truth." And his apostles say, "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus;" God "will judge the world in righteousness by that MAN whom he hath ordained;" "Jesus of Nazareth, a MAN approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him;" "Since by man came death, by MAN, also, came the resurrection from the dead;" and "In ALL THINGS it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

Some of the most widely accepted Creeds teach, as in the Westminster Confession of Faith, that all the posterity of Adam have at birth "a corrupted nature," and that while "elect infants" and "other elect persons are saved," "others not elect cannot be saved;" and again, as in the Episcopal Thirty-Nine Articles, that "original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, and therefore that, in every person born into the world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

Christ "took the little children up in his arms and blessed them, and said, Of such is the kingdom of heaven;" "Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

Some of the Creeds — the Westminster Confession of Faith, and all those based upon it — say that man is "wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body," "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil."

Christ in the parable of the sower represents our human nature in which the seed is sown as having its wayside, its stony places, and its thorns, but, also, as having its good ground which is capable of bringing forth thirty, sixty, and a hundred-fold; and, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, represents that when man sins he is not acting in accordance with his true nature, but going away from it, and that when he repents he "comes to himself;" and Paul the follower of Christ, though uttering many strong expressions about inherited depravity, says that "the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things written in the law, and show the work of that law which is written in the heart," and that, though he sees another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, yet he "delights in the law of God after the inward man."

Some of the Creeds say that "man by his fall into sin hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation."

Christ says, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak;" and Paul asserts, "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not."

The Creeds generally make the first and greatest commandment, and the one thing on which hang all the law and the prophets, to be the acceptance of the atoning merits of a crucified Redeemer.

Christ teaches that the first and greatest commandment is to love God with all the heart and soul and mind and strength, and that on this, with the kindred one of love to our neighbor, hang all the law and the prophets.

The Creeds assert that the repentance and confession of sins are not enough without a trust in the blood of Christ to procure the sinner's forgiveness.

Christ preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" there is "joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth;" and, through his disciples, that, "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Even the old Hebrew prophet could say, "If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, and all his transgressions shall not be mentioned unto him."

One of the Creeds says that "men not professing the Christian religion cannot be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious, and to be detested."

Christ says that at last all nations shall be gathered before the Son of Man, and that he will say to those on his right hand who have fed the hungry, and given drink to the thirsty, and clothed the naked, and visited the sick, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me; come inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founda-

tion of the world." And his apostles preached, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him."

The Creeds say that man's personal righteousness and good works, though required after conversion, are of no value in working out salvation, but that "the works done by unregenerate men are sinful, and displeasing in the sight of God."

Christ says, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven;" "The man who heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, is like unto a wise man that built his house on a rock." And his apostles say, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do;" "Whatsoever good thing ANY MAN doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord;" and "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall, for SO an entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The Creeds say that the only way in which man can be saved is by the substitution of Christ's punishment in the place of ours, and by having his righteousness imputed to us.

Christ says that "the Son of Man shall reward every man according to his works;" Paul, that "every man shall give an account of himself to God;" and Ezekiel, that righteousness and wickedness cannot be transferred back and forth from one person to another, but that "the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him and the wickedness of the wicked upon him."

The Creeds say that the atonement consisted in "the reconciliation of God to man," and that blood was necessary to expiate the Divine wrath.

Christ represents God as a Father standing at the eternal door, and, while his repentant children are yet a great way off, going out under the promptings of his own love to forgive and receive them; and Paul declares that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself;" "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself;" "Christ hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

The Creeds say that damnation is the future punishment of the soul amid the torments of hell.

Christ says, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."

Some of the Creeds say that God hath foreordained some men and angels unto everlasting life and some unto everlasting death, and that their number cannot be increased or diminished; and they teach generally that all human beings, whether in heathendom or Christendom, who do not accept the merits of a crucified Redeemer in this life, even those who have never heard of him, shall be lost in hell for ever, without chance of escape.

Christ teaches the certainty of eternal punishment, but uses the word "eternal" as referring to its kind, and not its length. He himself says, as the result of his work, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me;" the words of the Bible are over and over again that "The mercy of the Lord endureth forever;" and the apostle who had Christ's mind proclaims that "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

[No. 26]

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

BY

THOMAS STARR KING.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

I DO not approach this subject with any desire to lighten the sense of the evil of sin; or to intimate that the four Gospels, by any possible interpretation, patronize or justify any theory that seems lenient towards an unconsecrated life. There can be no religion worthy of the name, which does not imply and assume that the distance between right and wrong is immeasurable. The difference in worthiness and health, in quality and tendency, between a man who lives in the choice of evil, and a man who lives in loyalty, charity, and aspiration, cannot be fully expressed by any imagery drawn from space. Such persons are in opposite conditions. The one is in harmony with God, — with all his justice and all his love. The other is at discord with the truth of things, and with the nature, will, and mercy of the Infinite Father.

It is no part of a religious teacher's office to make such things as lying and stealing, lust and avarice, pride and slander, drunkenness and slavery, wrong voting and indifference of any kind to the rights and welfare of humanity, look otherwise than heinous and hateful. It is his office, as it is a prominent office of the New Testament, to interpret the dreadfulness of a selfish will, and an impure and callous heart. Living in such vices, we ought to see that we live in alienation from God, and, in greater or less degree, in

the state which the Scripture calls "death." The mission of the pulpit and of the New Testament is discharged by leading us to see what bondage, and misery, and deepening spiritual peril, attend depraved affections and evil habits as God regards them from his perfect freedom and purity; and by supplying the motives and forces that will restore us to inward harmony and reconciliation with God.

It is not, therefore, our primary duty, as Christians, to calculate the duration of the punishment of sin. We are rather to appreciate the wrong it does to ourselves, the mischief it works in the world, the offence it offers to the holy love of the Infinite, and the distance it creates between us and him. This, I believe, was the custom and tone of the thought of Jesus Christ. To rise into fellowship with his feeling about evil, we must banish conceptions of the duration of its penalty, or even of the pain that may attend it. We must learn to measure its wretchedness by the state to which it tends to sink the spirit, in which — and just so long as the state endures — all the laws and the very beneficence of the universe are hostile to it. If Christianity had not been perverted from the directions in which the language of Jesus pointed, we should not be involved in such sad discussions, as we are now often forced into, concerning the duration of punishment.

Ordinary Orthodoxy tells men that, unless they live according to a certain scheme of thought and service in this life, a *doom* of misery will be executed upon them in the life to come, from which God will not allow them any escape or return. This is the doctrine with which we take issue.

The ordinary Universalist conception is, that Christ has revealed, with definiteness and fulness, as one of

the central and textual doctrines of his religion, that the punishment of the wicked is to cease at a certain time, and that all will be restored to purity and joy.

The Orthodox doctrine is, to my mind, dreadful and monstrous. Nothing, it seems to me, has wrought, or can work, so much damage to Christianity, as the belief that, by the decree of God, this life is the final probation of all souls for an eternal destiny. Such a limitation of mercy, such a doctrine of doom, such a theory of mechanical separations, and of judicial, never relaxing retribution in the world to come, forbids any pure conception or powerful preaching of the essential evil of sin and vice, and turns attention to external and arbitrary penalties and perils. It corrupts our philosophy of the divine government. It breeds distrust and gloom, and slavish fear, and scepticism. It sets Christianity at war with our constitutional instincts of justice and charity.

And yet I freely say that I do not find the doctrine of the ultimate salvation of all souls clearly stated in any text, or in any discourse, that has been reported from the lips of Christ. I do not think we can fairly maintain that the final restoration of all men is a prominent and explicit doctrine of the four Gospels. We needlessly narrow the grounds of opposition to Sacrificial Orthodoxy, by attacking it from such a position. *This* we can say with assurance and emphasis: The doctrine of Eternal Punishment, as a judicial penalty, is utterly opposed to *the principles* of the religion of Jesus. We need nothing more than the conception he has given us of God, to make us sure that no spirit will ever be debarred from returning to allegiance whenever it desires; that there can be no period in eternity when the Infinite arms will not be wide open for any

prodigal, penitent and poor, that longs to escape from his miserable husks. There is no doom that will ever prevent this. And if we know that the love of God will never be withdrawn from any soul he has made; if we feel sure that the tremendous justice he has organized in the spiritual universe is secretly related to the health of the vilest man, our hearts can be at rest as to the problem of divine order.

The religion of Jesus does inspire this confidence in God. When we read it rightly, it forbids us to limit his mercy within this short life. There is nothing final in the divine government of souls. Into whatever district of the universe we move, we are in the embrace of perfect justice and perfect love. Seeing this truth clearly, Jesus did not attempt to write for us a calendar, or cipher the arithmetic of retribution. He endeavored rather to make men feel that an evil state is the worst thing in the universe; and that, so long as they remain in it, they are aliens from the Infinite love, who always desires their repentance and return.

The mission of Christ was to publish principles and pour regenerative life into the race; leaving it to our reason to balance truths, dispose them into system, and draw out all their logical contents. He taught men the infinite goodness of God, and how to interpret his goodness. He unfolded the majestic and constant laws of the blessed life, and of the life to which a wrong choice tends. He disclosed the inmost evil of sin, and in what the deepest sin consists, and the path out of it into liberty and peace. He lived to illustrate the possibilities of our nature and the excellence of God; in order thus to leave in the world the germ of a sacred future for humanity, and of a church that should

triumph over all social iniquity. There is no argument for the final triumph of goodness recorded in the four Gospels, nor any dogmatic textual assertion of that doctrine; but all the principles glow there, vivid as the sunlight, that are required to give us the most consoling trust in God through eternity, and the most cheering hope for man.

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Do you say, how shall we know what Christianity is, — how shall we get the instruction and comfort of revelation, from documents that are so fragmentary, and that use language with such poetic license? I answer, that God never intended to save us from the duties and responsibilities of individual thought. Providence, I believe, has made those fiery records so fragmentary, that we might be forced to disentangle *principles* from *imagery*, and unfold those principles by our own thought, and in harmony with all other truth we can gain, into the full proportions of Christian theology. Never reason from the imagery of Jesus mechanically, but from the principles of Jesus. Those principles plainly are, that God is an Infinite Spirit; that he is infinitely good; that the best qualities of humanity are but hints of his excellence; that all souls are his children; that evil is our most dreadful foe; that God desires our rescue from it; and that Christ is the expression of that desire, and of his holy and unchanging love.

If you want to know whether eternal punishment is to be inflicted as a penalty for the sins of this life; if you want to know whether God will ever cease to desire, or refuse to receive, the repentance and allegiance of any spirit born from him, — ask yourself if such a thought is in harmony with these principles, which are

the vital points of Christ's teaching. We cannot conceive too seriously the ingratitude of evil; the wrong which sin does to our own nature; the offence it offers to the purity of God; the peril which habits of evil, wrought into the constitution of our nature, induce, by sinking us away from the region of true life and blessedness. We may be sure, that, hereafter as well as here, the spiritual laws will be utterly hostile to every thing but goodness in us; and that we shall suffer according to our denial of God, and our chosen distance from him. But so long as the principles of Christ's religion are to be trusted, God will be our best friend, and will desire nothing so much, throughout eternity, as the penitence, return, consecration, and joy of the most abandoned nature.

Christ has given us cardinal truths of a great religion to be worked out by ourselves into intellectual results. Whatever results those principles lead to, are just as much parts of Christianity as if he had covered pages of sacred parchment in writing them for us. And until the doctrine of everlasting vengeance for the sins of this life, to be executed at a day of judgment, can be made to flow from the idea of God, the unspeakable excellence and the infinite father, — yes, even from the idea of God the omnipotent justice, — we may be sure that it is a foul excrescence on the gospel, a malignant cancer in the fair organism of its truth. We may be sure of this, even though the fact that the seeming statements of it by Christ are vivid imagery were but a tithe as clear.

And now, brethren, one word more. Are any Christians so deeply interested in seeing that this passage in the twenty-fifth of Matthew is not literal statement, but poetic symbol, as the strict Evangelical

believers are? If that passage is an accurate prophecy of the test at a final judgment, what becomes of the sacrificial theology? Of course, the literalists will not shun here the consequences of their own principle. Of course they will not say that, if Jesus was calmly describing the scene and the tests of the final day, he omitted to allude to the real ground of justification, pardon, and acceptance. Yet those who are accepted, according to the passage in Matthew, are approved on grounds of character, of charity, of humble faithfulness in the discharge of simple humanities. No such tests are required for entrance into heaven as are necessary for membership in any Trinitarian Church. Is this the Orthodox judgment-day? Where is the doctrine of depravity; of inexpiable guilt before the law; of the necessity of the cross of Christ; of the worthlessness of human works as the ground of acceptance; of faith in an atoning blood as the sole condition of pardon and the hope of heaven? Did Jesus forget to allude to any feature of "the scheme of redemption," in his delineation of the scene, where it comes to its solemn climax? If that passage be literally true, there need be no more controversy about the sacrificial faith; for the whole system of Orthodoxy is riven to splinters by its awful lightning. And liberal Christianity, with the doctrine of eternal punishment added to enforce the preaching of works and character, as the condition of entering heaven, is enthroned as the gospel truth.

But when we appreciate the indefinite sense of the word rendered "everlasting;" when we see the fragmentary character of the records preserved to us from Christ's instruction; when we estimate aright the poetic constitution of his spirit, and find how much of his truth is stated in symbol; when we see especially how,

in regard to his coming to judgment, Jesus used language, often more intense, which in every other instance must be understood as poetry, if we would save him from the charge of delusion or fraud, — we learn how to read this language so as to be not terrified but inspired. We learn, as a fundamental truth, that God gives us revelation by methods of art, and not by methods of science. He suggests; he does not tell. He inspires; he does not inform. The prophet is a painter in symbol, never a mathematician or professor. And we look on this parabolic passage of the King in judgment as a picture drawn by the great master of spiritual truth, to shed through the imagination of the race upon its heart the lesson, that indifference to humanity is alienation from God; to color the truth that "God is love, and he who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him;" and to enforce by the laws which rule eternity as well as time, the new commandment, "that he who loveth God, love his brother also."

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But it is said that we have no right to reason from human qualities as to what infinite equity may do. Then, we answer, why attempt to show the reasonableness of eternal punishment at all? It is only by finding some common ground between the infinite nature and ours, that the reasonableness of the penalty can be discussed. You may say that a blind man can know nothing of art. Surely, then, you will not attempt to argue with him about the propriety of Raffaelle's use of colors. If God is simply infinite power, and acts from sovereign pleasure, — or if infinite justice is something different in its nature from partial justice, as bitter is different from sweet, — then it is impossible for us to

argue from one to the other. But if God does not act from sovereign caprice, and if infinite justice is unspeakably purer in quality than finite justice, then the only way to conceive it, or reason about it at all, is by ascending to it, and testing it by means of the best traits and principles that are known and established among men. The Bible only uses the *words* justice, purity, and love in regard to our Maker. It gives us no external revelation of the *things*. These we are to conceive and measure precisely by our knowledge of what such sacred qualities are in men. To smother the light of our own nature, in order to receive all our principles from revelation, is, therefore, as some one has said, to put out our eyes that we may study the stars. Moreover, we are sure that God made our reason and our hearts. We cannot be so sure that he is the author of the Bible. So that, if we find insoluble discord between the two, there can be little question which must and ought to yield. . . .

It is contended, however, that there are analogies to be drawn from the divine government in this world that help us to conceive the reasonableness of eternal misery as a penalty of God's law. It is no proof, we are told, that God will not execute such a doom because he is good, and because he is a Father. He kills men by tornadoes and by pestilence, and by volcanic convulsions. His judgments are a great deep. . . .

Now, this argument, if it has any force, means this: God drowns men now; therefore he will do something infinitely worse than drown them for ever. He allows them, sometimes, to be torn in pieces here; therefore it is not improbable that he has built a boundless inquisition, as the substructure of nature, where the rack will be for ever plied, and which walls out every ray of light

and hope. He kills men, perhaps in thousands, by an earthquake, when the terror and the pains may last five minutes; therefore, it is reasonable to expect that he will shake the whole foundations of this world's order under them, and drop them by myriads into perpetual flame.

Take notice, brethren, with what unerring instinct the sacrificial theology runs to the anomalies and exceptions in God's government here, to bolster and enforce its theory of providence. Liberal Christianity reasons from the general laws and broad beneficence of the universe to the character of God; from the wide beauty, the solid foundations for general good, the sun that shines on the evil and the righteous, the rain that falls upon the unjust and the just. But wherever there is an apparent irregularity, and a seeming inconsistency with the stable and generous bounty and order, — an eclipse, a pestilence, an accident, a catastrophe, a mystery, — you will find the evangelical logic fastening on it, and attempting, not to harmonize it with the general light, but to centralize it as a principle. James Martineau has vigorously said of this argument: "Disorders are selected and spread out to view as specimens of the divine government of nature; the mysteries and horrors which offend us in the popular theology are extended by their side; the comparison is made, point by point, till the similitude is undeniably made out; and, when the argument is closed, it amounts to this: Do you doubt whether God could break men's limbs? You mistake his strength of character: only see how he puts out their eyes!" Of course, the only effect of such logic, where it is thoroughly received, is to make men doubt whether there is a perfect providence over the universe.

As to these exceptional cases of sinking steam-ships, and wrathful volcanoes, and destructive earthquakes, and innocence involved in misery with the guilty, or by the guilty, this is what liberal Christianity says: We do not pretend to show the *results* of perfect order here. We only claim to show the *laws* of a perfect order, and the tendency to it here. Orthodoxy shows neither a perfect order, nor the laws of it, nor any tendency to it; but anarchy in this world as the prelude to systematic, organized anarchy for ever. . . .

Ah! brethren of the sacrificial church, should you not beware how you thus imperil the glory of God; how you deny that charity is the law and the life of the heavens; how you blacken thus with impure logic the truth, that self-sacrifice and living for others is the highest divineness, even within the holiest of holies in the universe? The doctrine of eternal punishment, which starts with implicating the character of God, ends by spoiling the glory of Christ's love; for it demands that we should consider his dignity as superior to his compassion, and to affirm that he would not have been willing to suffer as much as thousands of finite natures have suffered, to lift from the world any thing less than everlasting woe.

We contend, indeed, that, if the doctrine of no repentance, no possibility of spiritual improvement, among the degraded hereafter be true, Christ was *not* the incarnation or the manifestation here of God's eternal love. The Infinite is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. If he can forgive your sin to-day, he can forgive it ten thousand years from now. Your danger is in yourself, — the soiling of your soul, the tightening of your habits, the lowering of your desires, the weakening of your will, the antipathies you are forming and

strengthening to the fellowship of the infinite. If God in himself is to be less cordial and gracious to his children in the next life than he is here, or than Jesus was here, then we say that there has been no incarnation of eternal love. Christ is not the expression of what God *is*, but is merely the mask of mercy which God wears towards our race during this brief life, and which he tears from his face when we pass beyond the tomb.

The horror of this thought! Let us not deal any longer with it. This doctrine of eternal punishment for the sins of this life desecrates all sanctities, and sucks us down into an atmosphere thick with inspirations of sacrilege. It is a hideous dream. It was born in heathenism. It is a pagan nightmare, oppressing the slumber of our cowardly Christian thought. . . .

Let us leave its murky air, and rise into the light of nature and of the principles of the religion of Jesus. You will find no comfort in this healthier atmosphere for your sin and any deliberate impiety of habit and heart. Everywhere God levels the bayonets of law around your evil. Everywhere he preaches to you that sin is your only foe; and that your sweetest life, your only stable peace, is in reconciliation with him, and openness to his holy spirit and love. But no attribute of his can be your enemy. You may be alien from him, and may resist him, and deny him, and curtain yourself from him by the thick blankets of your passions. But he cannot hate you. Your inward distress and torment are his medicine; the distrust of him which your guilt breeds is one of his thrilling revelations. Do not believe that his justice can ever be your foe.

Much of the confusion in the reasoning and scheme that we have been speaking of results from wrong conceptions of what the penalties of divine law and justice

are. They are not troubles to come externally upon the soul, — terrors and forfeits from which we must be relieved by a foreign expiation. They are internal, vital, and affect the quality of the soul itself. They are analogous to the retributions of ignorance upon the mind, and the penalties of carelessness and excess upon the body. No one dreams that the sin of an unexercised intellect, of gross ignorance, can be pardoned only through faith in the sacrifice of some incarnation of the Perfect Reason. No one expects to be told that the violation of the bodily laws can be forgiven by the Infinite Creator, only on the ground that some perfect physician honors them by obedience and death. It is by opening the mind persistently to God's published truth, and by conformity to the discovered physiological order, or the reception of the adopted remedy, that the mind and the frame experience new life. And our souls are redeemed, not by or through any expiation, on account of which penalties are lifted, but by reception of divinely given, spiritual truth and consecration of will that push away penalties by wholesome life.

The first penalty of the violation of God's law is the shadow cast before the soul when we turn our back upon it. The next is the change in the quality of the spirit itself, — a change which alters the universe to us, — if we live steadily in its shadow. Turn towards the law again, face its splendors, and the shadow falls behind you. God's justice is your help and light then. Although you cannot escape, for a long time, the inward penalties of your former violation, it helps you to eradicate them; and you are at peace with the infinite personal source of law.

Brethren, we need a religion that shall have no fear of the justice of God for ever; but boundless confidence

in it, rather. It is heathen to ask for an interest in Christ, in order to be shielded from God's law. If you are a sinner, seek deliverance from yourself, but not from God's law, or from God. Face his law. Ask for its searchings and scourge. Even if you are about to die, be not afraid of infinite justice. To slip away from it would be your only danger. It is inseparably mixed with God's love, as the gravitation of the sun with its light and heat.

Pray that you may come into harmony with it; for it is the basis and the strength of all order, here and for ever. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. Sweeter are his judgments than honey or the honeycomb. By them are his servants warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward."

[No. 27]

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

By BROOKE HERFORD.

"The Day of . . . Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God." — *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, ii. 5.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

In the passage quoted on the title-page, notice that St Paul speaks not of "the Day of Judgment," but of the "Day of *Revelation of* Judgment." It is only a small difference in word, and yet it is a difference which goes to the very heart of the deepest truth in the matter of retribution and judgment.

There has come of late an unmistakable dislocation between the old religious idea of judgment as ordinarily held by the churches, and the ideas which are growing up from increasing observation of nature and life. What has usually been considered the religious idea of judgment is that of a great settling-day, once for all, when men pass out of this world into the life to come; and this has been, moreover, strained and exaggerated into the doctrine that every soul is then irrevocably sentenced either to eternal heaven or eternal hell. Of late, however, all this doctrine has been breaking down. It could not stand against the higher thoughts to which men have been coming, of the wisdom and love of that Almighty Life that is back of all things. First, the dogma of the sentence of that judgment-day being final and absolutely unalterable, went, — that doctrine of the eternity of hell was too horrible to be believed; and, in spite of all bolstering up by church councils and votes of clerical meetings here and there, it has passed out of the living faith of thoughtful Christian people. But, following on this, even the idea of a future judgment-day at all has come

to be a difficulty with many. It seems to jar with the sense of the silent, unceasing working of law. Is it possible, thoughtful men are asking, that that mighty Divine Life should be only like man, — letting his sinful creatures go on for a while, and then "fetching up" the arrears of retribution by a formal judgment-day and a special sentence? Is not His judgment in reality always working, always accomplishing perfect justice in all things, if we could only see it? And yet it is hard to put aside all those solemn warnings of Christ as meaningless. Was it, then, all a mistake in him to put it to men as such a sorrowful and awful thing to pass on into the after-world from a sinful, selfish, unrepentant life here? Thus many people are perplexed.

Now, I love this word of Paul's about the "day of the revelation of judgment," because it seems to touch, with a little flash of inspired insight, the larger truth in which both of these ideas meet and blend. It implies a distinction between the judgment of God and the time when that judgment comes to be fully known and felt. Let it be, as it surely must, that the real judgment of God, the deep moral sequence of all action, works itself out absolutely, right as we go along. Paul's word says nothing against this. Yet none the less is it true that often it is not "revealed" now. Much of the deepest judgment, that is ever silently working itself out by all these divine laws of being, is utterly unknown at the time. Men are unconscious of it in themselves. Their fellows are blind to it. So here comes in the solemn significance of that thought, — "the day of the revelation of judgment." When we come to realize what that means, what it must be for the life to pass out of the disguise and self-delusion of earth, to stand in the light there where there are no secrets, — where the life is just what it has grown to be, and where, for the first time, it is fully and finally conscious of

that, — is there any warning Christ ever spoke about the awfulness of judgment that is too strong for that? And will the awfulness of the way in which it must come upon sinful souls be any the less, because in reality it is not a judgment then first given, but the revelation of a judgment, which has been growing in them all through life?

Let us look into this a little more closely. Try to realize, first of all, the awful certainty of that righteous will and law that is always working itself out. We want to keep in view the idea of *present* judgment, — not special judgment, but universal. That common idea of *special* judgments just perverts and belittles the mighty fact. When a theatre takes fire, good people talk about "a judgment." Well and good, if they will only understand that it is a judgment simply on the way the theatre was built or managed. Only, the truth is larger: every fire is a judgment; every accident or catastrophe is a judgment, — a judgment for the wrong or careless or ignorant handling of those awful edge-tools, the forces of Nature. All life, all being, all becoming, is growth, — growth which is alive with moral meaning, moral will and sequence. The harvest is a judgment on the sowing. Every finished work is a judgment on the way it has been done. Look where we will, we find the indication of this mighty fact, — not as something that works by fits and starts, but that is working constantly, a "power that makes for righteousness," a judgment that goes silently, inexorably on, in every outcoming of man's activity, and that surely is not less certain in the growth and becoming of man's life itself!

In a great part of life, we can see the judgment. A great deal of the moral sequence of conduct comes right out into view. For, this is God's world, and body and soul, material and spiritual, man's character and man's future are strangely interwoven and linked together

How many years' purchase is a throne worth, that is won by bloodshed and remorseless ambition? History tells many a grand tale of how that strange harvest which wrong-doing bears will crop up even through the marble floors of palaces. And so it is in common life. The proverbs of men own this constantly: "Murder will out;" "Easy got, easy gone." It is mostly the idle, shiftless man who has all the bad luck. It is the unsettled, unreliable tradesman, always "waiting for something to turn up," who thinks the world is against him, and complains that he never has a chance. The upright, honest man, if also of fair skill and perseverance, seldom fails — I do not say to get rich, — that can hardly be counted the fair end of man's life, — but to get a living, and to find the world not a very bad world to him, on the whole. So palpably is this the case, upon the broad view even of this present life, that, curiously, the one people of the older world who looked no further than the present life, — the Jews, — are the people who were animated by the strongest sense of the moral providence of God. "Behold," they said, "the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more, the wicked and the sinner." So struck were they with the moral working-out of life, even on the limited time-view of men and things!

But now, see! all this continual, unceasing working-out of judgment, and the visibility of a great deal of it, does not affect this fact: that a great deal of the judgment is *not* at once visible, is not at once known, only comes visibly out in some "day of the revelation of judgment." It is so even in material things: it is still more so in lives. A farmer sows poor seed, and neglects his hoeing and weeding into the bargain. The judgment goes working on every hour; but it is only when he reaps, and comes to sell, that the revelation of the judgment comes

to him. Market-day is the judgment-day in that thing. You build your wall out of the perpendicular, or with bad mortar. Probably it is "giving" all the time. Judgment is going slowly, inexorably on, from the moment you have finished it. But you say, "Oh, it is a good enough wall!" Some day it falls, — that is the judgment-day! A young man is idle and careless at his work, not very bad, but not up to the mark. He does not "take hold," barely earns his salary, — hardly that. Some day a pinch comes, or a change: trade is bad, — he is the first to go; or there is an opportunity for some one to rise, but he cannot have it! That is the judgment-day to him. Here is a man trading on bad principles: probably an accountant could read his fate in almost every item of business, every entry in his books. Some day the crash comes. That is the "judgment-day" to him, and yet in reality it is merely the day of "the revelation of judgment."

But it is in the realm of our very life, not of men's works or fortunes or positions, but of the very life itself which is in them, that all this is most strikingly true; because, in this inner realm of the life, soul, character, — whatever it is which constitutes our immortal, conscious being, — though judgment is always working, as in every thing else, there is still less of it that comes out as we go along. Something of it comes out. The life in us works outwardly to some extent. It often writes something of its judgment, day by day, in face and feature. The passions tell their tale. The muddled, bloated face of intemperance; the keen, ferret look of the covetous; the coarse animal features of the profligate; and, in lesser degree, the showy affectation of the vain, the simpering silliness of the frivolous, — these are all revelations of judgments which do not wait for any special day. And, on the other hand, goodness of every kind reveals itself, reveals something of its judgment as

life goes on: thoughtfulness, with its look of intelligence; integrity, in the open eye which can "look the whole world in the face;" kindness and gentleness, that touch the countenance with qualities which little children and dumb animals can read there. But still, all these things are only signs and tokens of the judgment that is working silently, upwards and downwards, in the life within. They are not complete disclosures of it. And the awful thing is that there is another side, even to this. In man's earthly existence, if there is often a partial disclosure of the life, there are also great facilities for disguise, not merely for men to disguise themselves from others, but even for themselves. This is, perhaps, the most awful thing in this human life of ours, — the power which we have of self-deception, of acting a part till we believe we *are* what we pretend to be. What poor, empty, worthless souls are often disguised in this world's trappings of wealth and rank, till they really believe themselves great things! Lives rotten to the core in sin and pollution, decked out in titles, set in high places, fancying themselves quite other than common clay; coarse, grovelling souls, getting, year by year, grosser, less capable of any but the poorest pleasures, and yet strutting on with a sense of importance before the world, receiving the greetings of men with pleased self-complacency, dully unconscious of their own emptiness and degradation, or vain, frivolous creatures, taken up with dress and pleasure; perhaps church-goers at a fashionable church, but without one earnest thought like Jesus Christ's, and yet quite looking upon themselves as Christians, and not having a doubt about their being quite superior people! Had Dives, in his "purple and fine linen," "faring sumptuously every day," any idea what he was growing into? His judgment was growing in him all along, — the judgment of a useless, self-indulgent life, of which, when it was

over, there was nothing to record except its sumptuous fare and its fine linen; but he would not know it! How should he know it, — a rich, respectable citizen, living in a fine house, with his five brethren, with plenty of friends sharing his sumptuous fare and regarding him as a pleasant, easy-going gentleman? Would he ever compare himself, any more than his friends compared him, to the lame beggar, Lazarus, who came to his gate for broken meat, or dream that Lazarus might be the better man, the one really to be envied? Absurd! Lazarus might be a worthy person for his position. "By all means, don't turn him away, give him the scraps, and see that the dogs don't hurt him." So Dives would say, in the careless, prosperous way of a man who had no occupation in life except to enjoy himself, but never dreaming of Lazarus being one between whom and himself any real comparison could possibly be instituted. And yet all the time Lazarus was truly the worthier; and, when they both died, it was not that God then judged them, and sent Lazarus to heaven and Dives to hell: it was that each found himself in that state into which he had been growing in his life, and it is between those *states*, far more than between any possible *places*, that there is that "great gulf fixed," which is so hard to overpass.

Now it is this awful facility which the world affords for disguise and self-deception about the judgment which is always working in soul and character, which gives such a force of meaning to Christ's parables of judgment, and especially to that finer distinction of Paul's, — "the day of the revelation of judgment." For, all that disguise and self-deception are only things of the present. They are of the body and the dress and the worldly position As men pass on, one by one, through that "dim partition of unconsciousness," as Sears calls it, which is all that separates this life from the life to come, all that disguise

simply drops away. All life's show and sham, all that is not of the life itself, stays *this* side! *That* is the judgment-day, the awful daylight of that world where secrets are no longer hid, and every soul stands simply for what it has grown to be. That is the judgment-day: not because God sits there, sentencing souls to this place or that, but simply because it is *day*, — clear light, — no longer darkness or twilight or any deceptive thing, but day, truth. Not the day of any new judgment, — no need to think of that, — "the day of the revelation of judgment." But what a day of revelation! How many a one who has made a goodly show on earth must then stand forth such a mean, shrivelled, degraded soul as the angels will shudder to behold! How many a one who has sinned some great sin, or lived some life-long lie, will then appear in that light, just for what he is, the sin, the lie all visible, — his life almost shaped into that, as it were! How many a one who has just repented at the last, after a life of selfishness or vice, and thought that the work of salvation was all done for him, and that he should get through all right "in the judgment," will find that it is no question of getting through; that his judgment is simply what he takes with him, that which has been growing in himself, in his life, silently but surely year after year, and which no momentary repentance can undo. And before all stretches eternity, — endless reaches of life; life that there is no running away from; life that there is no forgetting; life in which the future still keeps working the judgment of the past; life in which only goodness, kindness, purity, love, are Heaven; life in which passion, greed, selfishness and sin are always Hell!

Does it need images of fire and demons to make that awful? Why, there is no word Christ ever spoke, of all those awful parables in which he tried to waken men to the dreadfulness of passing on, hardened, blind, and sinful,

to that eternity, — no word so awful as the bare reality of continued, indestructible life itself, in the light of these thoughts of moral sequence and retribution which science and philosophy themselves bring home to us. The idea of judgment, busy in a man's own soul all through life, and there revealed, may not at first sight seem so fearful as the old notion of souls then being sent, once for all, if not to Heaven, then to Hell. But it is more awful. There is more certainty about it, even while there is more hope. It may not close the final possibilities of life. These moral judgments of God, in this world, and surely in the world to come as well, are forces which "make for righteousness," not for retribution only, but for righteousness. Beyond all that we can think, lies still the mercifulness of God and the free will of man. But this does not lessen the awful certainty close at hand. The old doctrine of Hell, as a place to be sentenced to, defeats itself. No one realizes it. Every one thinks he shall just manage to pass, that somehow God will find him some way of mercy. Besides, the whole scheme of Orthodoxy favors this idea of escape. Let a man's sins have been never so great, he is taught that Christ bore the punishment of them; and that, if he will only believe this, he has nothing else to do. From that moment, he may feel sure of heaven. Thus, the common idea of hell looks supremely dreadful; but any one can get right round it. Look, however, at this great truth, as Paul teaches it; and all the uncertainty is gone. There is no getting round this, no evasion, no escape! Man does not go to judgment in the next world: he takes his judgment with him there. The state in which he finds himself is not something he is sentenced to, but simply what he has grown into. If he feels it hell, it is simply what his soul has been growing into all through life; the only difference being that *here* he did not know it, hardly felt any thing of it, and that *there* he *does* know it, cannot

get away from the feeling of it. There is no tampering with this. It is not a question of whether God may not be merciful. It is the Mercifulness which is at the heart of the Almightiness that causes this to be. It is not a question of whether Christ is or is not a Saviour. He *is* the Saviour, if we will believe in him and be made righteous by him here; but not our Saviour to get men passed into heaven upon some legal fiction of his merits and righteousness being transferred to them. Righteousness cannot be transferred. It can only grow in us, and it is a slow, gradual growth, too. If a man goes on into that spirit-world with his soul dwarfed and mean and worldly, no heaven could be heavenly to him. One of the most striking passages in Swedenborg is where he speaks of this. In one of those strange meditations of his, in which he thought himself actually in the spirit-world, he says: "There were some who believed that they should easily receive divine truths after death, when they heard them from the angels, and that they should then believe them, amend their lives, and be received into heaven." And he goes on to tell how he saw that the experiment was tried on great numbers of them. They wished that "the life of the love they had contracted in the world" — what a significant word! — "should be taken away from them, and that the angelic life, the life of heaven, might be infused into its place." But it could not be. When it was tried, the only result was "they lay as if dead:" they could receive no other life, could live no other life, but their own. Suppose it only a vision: it is a vision of wonderfully deep insight! And the meaning of it just comes to the same point as Paul's word: "The day of revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

This is not intended to fill us with dread of the future, but to awaken the true awe about the present. "Now is the day of salvation," says Paul: yes, because *now* is the

judgment-day. There may be no visible gathering of the nations, no palpable dividing of the sheep from the goats; no audible voice may speak the condemnation, "Depart from me!" or pronounce that blessed sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" yet daily, hourly, in all the myriad lives that throng this world, that solemn parable is coming true, and men are passing, little by little, away from right, away from God, further and further from peace and blessedness, or, are "coming up higher," into that fuller, nobler life to which all true living ever tends. Brothers and sisters, which is it to be? Young men and maidens, which way is your life growing? Is it growing upwards or downwards? There is only one way for peace and joy. That better life to which Christ calls us is the happiest life even here: beyond, it is the only life that is not misery and woe and shame. Begin it now! Whatever is wrong, clear it away now! Said Mahomet, "Better to blush in this world than in the world to come." Whatever is evil, whatever will not bear the light, clear it away now, even though it be like cutting off the right hand or plucking out the right eye! Then is life true; and it will grow upwards, and find blessing as it grows, and be like the pathway of the just "that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
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THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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[No. 28]

WHY AM I A UNITARIAN?

BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

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The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and wpward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christanity: and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

WHY AM I A UNITARIAN?

But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers."—ACTS xxiv. 14.

WHY am I a Unitarian? Why are we Unitarians? Is it because we like to stand apart from the rest of the Christian Church? Is it because there is any special pleasure or satisfaction in being known as heretics? Is it because we would not enjoy as others enjoy being in the sympathy and in the brotherhood of the whole Christian Church? By no means. We should all like that. We are not Unitarians, and do not call ourselves Unitarians, because there is any special pleasure in standing thus alone and apart from our brethren whom we respect and honor, though they differ from us. Why, then, did the early Unitarians in this country; why did he who first professed himself avowedly a Unitarian in this city and in this country, Dr. Freeman; why did William Ellery Channing and Henry Ware; the late revered and beloved James Walker of Cambridge, and Francis William Pitt Greenwood, that pure apostolic soul,—why did these come out from the rest of the Christian Church and stand apart? It was because they thought that it was necessary to bear witness to some truths which they believed had been neglected or forgotten, and they were willing to encounter any possible obloquy or opposition in the defence of what seemed to them to be important truth. And now I propose to show you why some of us still believe the same, and think that the time for this protest against

many of the popular doctrines of the Christian Church is not over.

Perhaps some present may say, "What do you mean when you speak of a Unitarian? Unitarians have no creed, and, therefore, they have no common belief at all. There is nothing which can be represented as Unitarian belief, since there is among them no fixed or avowed creed." It is very true, that, for reasons which I shall presently state, we have not any formal creed or Confession of Faith; but it does not by any means follow from this that we have no common belief. There may be a common belief when there is no definite, precise, or formal statement of it. Take a great party, for instance, like the Democratic party, or the Republican party; they have no Thirty-nine Articles, they have no Confession of Faith, nevertheless, they have a belief. There are certain great ideas which unite them together, and which make their faith. Suppose that you should go into one of our universities, and should find there certain professors calling themselves geologists, teachers of geology; or of chemistry; or of astronomy; and you should say to them, "Where are your Thirty-nine Articles of astronomy? Where is your Confession of Faith of chemistry?" and they should reply, "We have nothing of the sort." "Why, then, you cannot have any common belief; the astronomers in one university probably teach an entirely different doctrine from the astronomers in another; and so do the chemists and geologists." "No," they would answer, "we have a common belief, which is determined by certain convictions which we all share, certain knowledge which we all possess; and, though we may differ in details from each other, you will find that the professors of astronomy in Oxford in England, and Cambridge in the United States, and in the University of Paris, teach essentially the same thing, though they have not formulated their

doctrines into any creed." You can express the union of men in a common faith in two ways, just as you can express the union of a flock of sheep in two ways. You can put a flock of sheep into a fold, and build a fence around it, and that will distinguish it from any other flock. You will say, "The flock that I refer to is in that fold." Or else you may say, "The flock of sheep which I refer to is the flock which has such a man for its shepherd." If you are travelling over the hills of Syria, you may see two great flocks of sheep coming from different directions, and meeting each other and passing each other; each with its shepherd at the head, each following its common shepherd, and never confounding themselves together, although they have no fence around them to separate them. And, so, parties in the Church and parties in the State can have a fence put around them, and you call it a creed; or they can be inwardly animated by the same great ideas which lead them as the shepherd leads his flock; and because they love these ideas, they are sufficiently identified in their faith.

We believe that there is a mischief in these fences which men set up and call creeds or articles, and therefore we refuse to submit to them or to accept them. The tendency of the creed, we think, is to prevent progress, because it defines beforehand the limits of opinion, and tells men before they begin to inquire what results they are to arrive at, and so prevents progress; as Lord Bacon long ago said, that "system, because it has a show of completeness, doth arrest men as if they were already at the furthest." And another difficulty about the creed is that it tends to hypocrisy. Far be it from me to say that those great denominations which have creeds are hypocrites. They are as honest, no doubt, as we are. Nevertheless, the tendency of the creed is that way. It is a remark which I have found in one of those charming

volumes of Mrs. Stowe, in which she put so many of the experiences of her early life, when she was in the habit of sitting, a quiet little girl, and noticing the conversation of the friends of her father, the Orthodox clergymen, who came to see him, — it is one of her remarks, that "it is a custom of theologians to assume that theology is a progressive science, and at the same time to maintain that we must hold exactly the same things which were held a hundred years ago." Now, it is very true that you will find creeds which do not represent the present opinions of those who profess to hold the creeds. It would be very hard, I think, to-day, to find in the Presbyterian Church of the United States many clergymen who would teach the doctrine that infants dying in infancy were lost; and yet what does the creed say in respect to that? It says, "Elect infants shall be saved;" and it does not give us the least hope or promise that all children dying in infancy are elect, any more than they would all be elect were they to grow up and die then. And yet, though the creed certainly shows, as far as it shows any thing, that the Presbyterian Church believes in the damnation of a large proportion of infants, its members would be shocked and horrified if we were to accuse them of that. And it was not a great while ago, in a convocation of the Church of England, — which church ordains and commands that every one of its thirty thousand ministers shall, four times a year, read in the open church the creed of St. Athanasius, which ends by stating that all who do not believe its metaphysical distinctions shall without doubt perish everlastingly, — that, in that convocation of the Church of England, a bishop arose and declared, without a single voice dissenting, that there was not a man in the whole body who believed that affirmation in the creed. Well, the tendency of all this is certainly toward hypocrisy; toward professing to believe what we do not believe

And for these two reasons, because creeds tend to prevent progress of thought, and because they tend toward making men profess what they have ceased to believe, and have passed by, we reject them.

I am speaking to-night for myself; and yet I believe in speaking for myself I am speaking for many more. In saying why I am a Unitarian, I do not profess to say that others who are not Unitarians may not believe a great many things that I do, and believe them more fully than I do. But in giving my views to-night on this subject, I give this as one reason for my belief: that the views commonly held by Unitarians can all be stated in the simple, distinct language of the New Testament, while few of the opinions which we reject can be so stated. That is a reason for being a Unitarian, that we are able to state what we believe in the simple language of the New Testament; while the doctrines which we reject cannot be so stated. If we are asked to give our views concerning God, for instance, we can say, in the words of Scripture, "that though there be called gods many, yet to us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we in Him," and that "in Him we live and move and have our being;" that "He is light, and in Him is no darkness at all;" that "He is love, and whoso loveth dwelleth in God and God in him." And if we are asked to give our belief concerning Christ, we can also express that belief in the simple words of Scripture: "There is one Lord, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;" "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." These are the expressions which define precisely our views concerning God and Christ; but while the New Testament teaches so plainly that the Father is the only true God, it nowhere teaches that there are three subsistences or three persons

in God. It nowhere uses the word Trinity at all, or Triad, or Triune, in relation to God, these having all been subsequently invented for that purpose: but, moreover, it does not say anywhere that "The Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God." It does not anywhere say that Christ is God the Son, the second person in the Trinity. It nowhere teaches that when Christ prayed to God he was praying to himself; that when he was tempted, he was the being whom the Scriptures say cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts any man that when he said, "I can do nothing of myself," what he meant was that he could do every thing of himself; that when he said, "My Father is greater than I," he meant by that to state that he was equal with God; and that when he says, "No man hath seen God at any time," the meaning of that is that Christ, whom so many had seen, was the unseen God. I am a Unitarian for this reason, to begin with: that we can state every one of our opinions in the plain, simple language of Scripture, while it is impossible to state the old doctrines in such language. You cannot state the doctrine of the Trinity in the language of the New Testament. You cannot state the deity of Christ in relation to the Trinity in the language of the New Testament. You cannot state the Calvinistic doctrine concerning sin — namely, of inherited guilt, of total depravity, of the imputation of Adam's sin — in the language of the New Testament. Therefore, it seems to me, we have an advantage here, as far as it goes. Moreover, it is very certain — at least it is certain to us — that if all the creeds, and all the teaching in accordance with the creeds, should cease to exist, and that if men should study only the New Testament, it would be impossible for them, by the simple reading of the New Testament, to find the doctrine of the Trinity or the deity of Christ in that volume.

We have seen many instances of the truth of this I have myself known many persons who, having been educated to believe the doctrine of the Trinity from childhood, by the simple reading of the New Testament, — never having seen a Unitarian, never having read a Unitarian book, never having heard a Unitarian sermon and some of them not knowing that there was any such person in the world as a Unitarian Christian, — have nevertheless come by the simple reading of the New Testament to the Unitarian belief, and have been very much amazed when they found that there were others besides themselves in the world holding that doctrine.

Another reason for being a Unitarian is, — and this, perhaps, may surprise some who have been accustomed to think that Unitarians believe correctly as far as they go, but that they do not go far enough, — another reason is, that our views enable us, as it seems to us, to believe *more* concerning God and Christ and the Bible and sin and salvation, than we could if we accepted the usual creeds of the Church. We are not Unitarians in order to believe less, but we are Unitarians because Unitarianism opens wide the gate through which we can pass up and on into higher, larger, and nobler truths. We can believe *more* in the power of redeeming love and redeeming grace, *more* in the beauty and glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I do not say that we are more religious, or that we have more faith than those who differ from us; but I do say that we have the power, if we use it aright, of going down into a deeper religion and going up into a higher faith than if we were bound by the creeds of the churches. Take, for example, the Trinity. We are able, as it seems to me, to believe more about God by omitting that doctrine; to have more faith in God, not less. For what is the Trinity but essentially a system of negations? The substance of the Trinity is this: that

you must not believe this on that side, and you must not believe this on the other side, but something indefinite and undefined between. The Trinity declares that, in the nature of the Deity, there are three persons, and that these three are one. But you must not suppose the three persons to be three persons in the sense in which three men are persons, — in which Peter and James and John are three persons. You must not go as far as that on that side, and on the other side you must not believe that three persons are only three manifestations or three relations, or three modes of action of the Deity; you must believe more than that on the other side, and somewhere between you must stand; but exactly where, we are never told. Now I say that to believe that is not to have a positive conviction, but only a negative belief. And if we demand the meaning of these terms, — subsistences, if you please, — if we demand to have the definition in order to believe it, we are told that it is a mystery; it is a great mystery. And then if we say, "If it is a mystery then we cannot believe it," we are told, "Why not believe a mystery? You believe a great many things that are mysterious. You believe that the grass grows, and *that* is a mystery. You do not know how it grows." Then to that we always make the same reply, and that reply, to my mind, is perfectly satisfactory, and I have never heard any answer to it; and yet it is never accepted as an answer. If we are told that we believe that the grass grows, and it is a mystery because we do not know how it grows, we reply that the fact that the grass grows is not a mystery; it is a simple fact which we perfectly understand. *How* it grows is a mystery, and therefore we do not believe any thing about the way in which the grass grows. We do not believe the how, because it is a mystery. We do believe that the grass grows; that is not a mystery. It is perfectly true, and

must always be true, according to the constitution of the human mind, that where mystery begins the belief ends; and it ends just at that point. Suppose we set aside this whole doctrine as something which is the work of man, — a system of metaphysics grown up in the Church; suppose we set it all aside, and then, instead of looking for God in this system of dialectics, in this logical puzzle, we open our eyes and minds and hearts, and we find Him everywhere in nature, in life, in all beauty, in all history. We see Him in the slow, majestic processes of creation; we see Him in the reaches of terrible power in the universe; we see Him in the immense revolutions of the stars, and in the wonderful structure of the little insect, just perceptible to the most powerful microscope, on the leaf of the little plant; we see Him in the long years which, in the geological ages, preceded the formation of this earth. Everywhere that divine power is working around us. We see it in all the beauty which is manifested in the mountains, clouds, and seas, and brooks, and sunrise; in all the history of the human race; in childhood, and youth, and society; in business, in pain, and in joy; in all the riches of the world; because in all of them there is some manifestation of the divine truth and love, and He has left no race and no family of mankind orphans, without some knowledge of Himself. And in the soul, in the distinction between right and wrong born in us all, in the vast idea of cause by which we go backward to the beginning of the universe, and in the great conception of the infinite by which we, little creatures of the dust and of the day, are able to reach out beyond all knowledge and all understanding, and grasp the eternal, — in all these we find Him. In this we have vastly more, not less, than in the belief that in the Godhead there are three persons, and that yet those three persons are not three Gods, but one God, and that a person is more than

a mode, but less than a personal man. Now we find God above, around, beneath, and within, and we gladly accept the great words of the poet, and say of Him: —

> "All are but parts of one majestic whole,
> Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
> Who, changed in all, and yet in all the same,
> Great in the earth as in the starry frame;
> Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
> Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
> Lives through all life, extends through all extent
> Spreads undivided, operates unspent.
> To Him no high, no low, no great, no small,
> He fills, He bounds, connects, and blesses all."

And thus, too, in rejecting the technical and theological doctrine of the deity of Christ, we do not believe Christ less divine, but more. To *say* that Christ is God, unless we know what we mean by it when we say it, does not show us God in Christ; does not make him a revelation of God. It is to see something divine in Christ which brings us to God; and that is what he came for — to bring us to God. To say that he is perfect God, and at the same time perfect man, confuses the mind, and leaves it in darkness and not in light. But we see something of God in Christ whenever we see that the goodness of this highest child of earth, of this greatest of all human souls which God ever sent into this world, that his goodness must be a revelation of the Maker, because he comes nearer to the Maker than any other; and, therefore, in his goodness, in his daily life, in the happiness of his soul, we study and find more and more of the Deity. When we accept him as a pure man, as a simple man, made in all things like his brethren, and yet without sin, then we know that man was not meant to be a sinner, and that God did not make it necessary for man to sin, and that the time is surely to come in which men following Christ

will rise above sin. When conscious of evil, conscious that we are ourselves sinners, doubting and distrusting the pardoning love of God, we open the New Testament, and we find Christ saying to the sinful woman, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more"; when we find him saying, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee," making no condition, but teaching that the moment we come in simplicity of heart, seeking for pardon, he loves to bestow it, in that we see something of the divine fatherly affection which comes to us through the eyes of Jesus, and shows to us that God also, when we come to Him with the same longing for pardon, will say, as Jesus said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." And so we find more of God in Christ, not less, because we do not embarrass ourselves by these technical and theological distinctions, but accept him as he appears everywhere to be — a simple man — a man who, by the divine gift and help and inspiration, was able to rise till he came so near to God, that when we see him we catch something of the reflected light of the Deity shining in his face. An old English religious poet has said: —

> "A man who looks on glass,
> On it may stay his eye,
> Or, if he pleases, through it pass,
> And then the heavens espy."

Christ, as a man, is the glass. If we please, we can look on the glass, stay our eyes on that. Then we see his human character. Or we can look through the glass and see that he is a mediator of God, who shines through his mind and heart, and so fills us with a sense of the great Deity. So we are able to see more and not less of God in Christ, than if we held the common view.

And also, by setting aside all technical and theological views concerning the Holy Spirit, we can believe more

and not less in the Holy Ghost. To us, God is so near to the human heart, He is so full of overflowing love for man, and He is so ready to bestow the best gifts on his children, that it is a universal law, as universal and sure as the law of gravitation, that whenever we open our souls to Him, seeking for his influence and help, and for what is true and what is right, something of that divine life will pass into our souls; that there is no accident in the gift of the Holy Spirit; that it does not come here to-day and there to-morrow; that it does not attend the path of some great revival; that it is not monopolized by prophets, or saints, or the professors of any particular religion; but that it is everywhere, just as the sun shines and the rain falls on the evil and on the good, whenever they are ready to receive it. So God's love, God's truth, the influence of his Holy Spirit, descends into the heart, whether of saint or sinner, good man or bad, orthodox or heretic, the moment he, looking up, opens his soul and says, "O Lord, help me to know thee, and be a better man!" Thus we can believe more and not less in the Holy Spirit by setting aside the old theology.

And we can believe, as it seems to me, more in the Bible and not less, by not believing in the verbal inspiration of the Bible. We believe that those who wrote the Bible were inspired men, led and filled by the power of God; and we believe it because of the greatness of the book itself, because it has done so much and is doing so much. It must have God in it, else it could not do the work it has done. One of the chief proofs of the inspiration of the Bible is, that it is able to withstand the ten thousand perversions that have been put upon it. There is hardly an error or villany but has been defended out of the Bible. The Bible has been made in our time to defend slavery. The president of one of our New England colleges argued from the Bible, in a book which he

took occasion to write in the middle of the great struggle between freedom and slavery, — this orthodox president of one of the orthodox colleges of New England wrote a book, in which he argued that slavery was a divine institution; and he almost went the length of saying what is logically to be implied, that we in New England were committing a sin against God because we did not hold slaves here. The Bible has been used to defend almost every wrong that man has ever practised on man. Most terrible doctrines have been taught out of it and defended out of it. Because Noah is reported, after he came out of the ark, to have cursed Canaan, it was argued that this is a proof that the negroes — who were not descended from Canaan — ought to be made slaves. Because Noah, at the period when he was not entirely free from faults of his own, declared that whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, an argument was drawn in support of capital punishment. The Bible has been set against astronomy, science, and almost every discovery of man, and yet the Bible lives. That is a proof of its inspiration. It has so much good in it that it cannot be put down by its own friends; and there is nothing that has more occasion than the Bible to say, "Save me from my friends." But the Sermon on the Mount will never grow old; the Lord's Prayer rises to God every morning from the lips of infancy, and is chanted every day in the liturgies of nations; and there is nothing in human thought or in human love which is not fed and strengthened and helped out of the Bible. And because we see that, we believe in it. But we do not believe that the Bible came down from heaven translated into the English, and printed, and having the proof corrected, and being bound up, and coming to us in that inspired form. We believe it was liable to mistakes all the way through; that the men who wrote the Bible were not

infallible, though they were inspired; that they saw some great truths and uttered them, and for the sake of those truths the Bible has lived and will live. But they were not free from mistakes. Consequently the Bible is a human book, only the best human book there is; and the Bible being a human book, we can read it freely as we read any other human book; and, if we find something we cannot understand, we may wait until we do understand it. If you find something that contradicts your moral sense, do not believe it; set it aside. You need not say it is false, because, perhaps, you do not understand what it is and what it means; but never accept any thing, if it is in the Bible, as true, which you cannot see to be true, and never accept any thing in the Bible to be good when it seems to be in contradiction to your moral sense; and so using the Bible it will help you a thousand times more than if you make it a master and your mind its slave.

The faith of Unitarians enables them to believe more in all these ways. I do not say we do believe more than others, or that we have any more faith than others; but we have the power. We can also believe more fully in sin and the evil of sin than if we accepted the common doctrines about sin. The common doctrines about sin are theological doctrines, and they have a theological and metaphysical sound. They do not seem to bear on human life or conduct. When we are told that sin came into the world by Adam; and that through Adam we have become sinners; and that the sin we committed is Adam's sin; and that somehow or other Adam's sin is imputed to us; and that we inherit from our federal head the guilt of sin; and that somehow or other we are totally depraved, and yet are bound to do right, and are very sinful if we do wrong; that we cannot do any thing of ourselves that is right, because no one ever does

or can, but nevertheless we are bound to do right, — when we are told these things, what is the effect on the mind as regards sin? The whole effect is to make a man think that sin is a sort of metaphysical thing with which he has not any thing to do, — except perhaps in church. But when we consider that sin is that which separates us from the divine truth and divine love; that sin is falsehood and that sin is selfishness; and that because God is true and God is love, then whenever we are selfish, and whenever we are false, we are separating ourselves from that divine friend, and plunging downward instead of going upward, — then we can understand the evil of sin.

Moreover, I think, as Unitarians, we can believe more in punishment, and not less than those who believe the theological doctrine. I do not believe in everlasting punishment, because it seems to me to be dishonorable to God. The doctrine of everlasting punishment, as it is held to-day, is, that man is sent into this world by his Maker in such a condition that he is capable of plunging himself into eternal ruin by what he can do in this world, so that he may reach a state in which he may be for ever and for ever a sufferer, without any power of reform or return. Now, there is not a man, I will not say a good man, I will not say a saint; but there is not a decent man, with decent human feelings, who would be willing to be accused of such a thing as is thus ascribed to the Almighty. It is one of the saddest things in the world that theology can so pervert the common human sense and human heart that we can ascribe to the Infinite blessedness and the Infinite love that which we should consider disgraceful, if performed by a human being. And, therefore, I say that we can believe more in punishment, and not less, when we see that punishment follows sin as its medicine intended for its cure; and that though there may be hells in the future life, as

well as heavens in the future life, hell below hell, and heaven above heaven, yet the hells as well as the heavens in the future world, if there are hells and heavens there, are all the angels of God, all ministers of his love, all sent for our good, all sent to bring us back to him; and that there is no suffering inflicted upon any child in this or in any other world which is not intended to help or to save Believing this, we can believe in punishments hereafter as in punishments here, because we can believe in them and still believe in the perfect goodness of our Heavenly Father, — knowing that he has made us free and that he respects our freedom, and that he does not mean to make us good against our will here or anywhere else, but that he surrounds our evil with his infinite and perfect methods. Since Jesus has taught us in this world that we are to overcome evil with good, therefore that we *can* overcome the evil with good, then the Lord who sent Jesus into this world must have as much power as he attributes to us here; and, with his infinite good, he must sooner or later overcome all evil. Feeling this, we can believe in punishment as a means of reform, and we can believe more in the glory and beauty of the gospel and in Jesus as the representative of good in this world, standing as the medium through whom God's love and light flow to us. We can believe more fully in it, if we believe that he helps us with that divine power which is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through him in this world or in any other world. We do not believe that the sovereignty of God is such a limited sovereignty that after man's death God is not able to do any thing more to help him, but is shut out from his creature by the mere fact of his death, so that his love can no longer reach him. We do not believe that the sovereignty of God is a sovereignty which rules over one part of the universe, leaving the devil and his fiends and the sinners to have their own

way in another part of the universe. We believe that the sovereignty of God is that which shall extend through all worlds, and which shall redeem all worlds; a sovereignty whose power will never be balked by any thing which men or Satan can do, and which shall, in the end, cause every knee to bow and every tongue to confess that Jesus, regarded as the representation of truth and of love the manifestation of the divine beauty and glory, is the true Lord of the universe. So we can believe more in redeeming love, not less, since we believe it can extend to other worlds as well as to this.

Now I have shown you some of the reasons why I am a Unitarian. It is not because I wish to believe less in God, Christ, or religion, but because I wish to believe more; to have more faith in God, more faith in man, more faith in Christ, more faith in religion, more faith in the Bible, and more faith in the triumph of divine love. It seems to me that our views are more intelligible than those which have been so carefully arranged on the metaphysical anvils of the middle ages. Those were hammered out with a great deal of skill and a great deal of care, but they are mediæval doctrines, and they do not belong to the nineteenth century; they are an anachronism here at the present time. God has given to us all common sense, and when He speaks to us He speaks to our common sense. Christ rejoiced, not that his doctrines were mysterious, but that they were revelations; and he said, "I thank Thee, O Father, that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent," — who, probably, in those days as in these, were hemmed in and shut up by their metaphysical doctrines and theologies, — "that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." That seems to me to be proof, so far as it goes, that the doctrine which is the most intelligible is likely to be the most true. The Unitarian doctrine is also the most

rational, because it does not demand of us to believe a contradiction. It is the one which opens a vaster future to mankind. It does not shut up Christ in any one belief, or in any one church, or any one party. Jesus said of himself, when Pilate asked him whether he was king, "Thou hast said it; I am king, and this is my royalty. For this thing was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth; and every one who is of the truth hears my voice, becomes my servant, belongs to me and I to him." Every true man belongs to Christ,—for Christ is the manifestation of good,—whether he knows it or does not know it. He may call himself a deist, he may call himself an infidel, he may call himself a Mohammedan, he may call himself a Brahmin; but if he loves the truth, and is following the truth, desiring to know it that he may do it; seeking to do good to his fellow-men; seeking to love the infinite beauty more and more,—then he belongs to Jesus, and he is a Christian without knowing it, and will be so accepted on the last day. If that is not so, then the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew does not contain the truth, because in that chapter Jesus himself tells us what shall be the judgment of the Gentiles. On that day shall the Gentiles be called before him, and then he shall say: "Come to my right; you belong to me." And they shall say, "We did not know we had done any good for you." He will say, "When I was hungry you fed me; when I was thirsty you gave me drink; when I was a stranger you took me in; when I was naked you clothed me." And they will say, "We were only doing it to our fellow-men." And he shall reply, "When you did it to them you did it to me." That is the royalty of Christ: that every thing that is good and true in this world is tending toward him, and that he is to reign until all truth and all good under his guidance and lead shall have conquered all the powers of

evil. Therefore we are Unitarians, because this doctrine seems to us to open a better future to the human race than any other. It is good to live by, and it is good to die by. It is certainly good to live by, because it shows us that this world is not the devil's world but God's world: that things here are good in their essence, tending toward good and toward God. If there is evil and sin around us here it is that we shall fight with it, and struggle against it, and overcome it by the power of divine love. It is a good world to live in, no matter whether we suffer or whether we are joyful.

Unitarianism makes this a good world to live in, for it teaches that an infinitely good Being has made it for us, and an infinitely good Being has placed us here; and He is our providence, our shield, and our support evermore. It is a good religion, also, to die by. It is a good religion to die by, because it tells us it is a good thing to die: it is a good thing to die when death comes, and not a bad thing. Death is not the king of terrors to us. Death is a friend. Since God has sent death to all His creatures, just as He has sent life to all His creatures, death must be just as good, when it comes, as life while it remains. We believe in that infinite love which is just the same in the other world that it is here. We believe that the mercy of the Lord endureth for ever, and not merely for the seventy short years of human life. We believe that through all eternity, as through all time, we shall be surrounded by that divine grace, and wrapt in the arms of that blessed tenderness; and that so we are safe everywhere while we trust in God and lean on Him. And, as we find no little polyp in tropical seas, brought into being under the providence of God, without having a place arranged beforehand for its home, and having its food prepared for it beforehand, and all the conditions of life cared for carefully before it comes, we may be sure that when we, who are better than

they, as Jesus tells us, and nearer to God than they, pass on in His providence into the other world, there will be at least an equal care for us there, and an equal arrangement made for our reception there, and homes as good and suited to all the needs of our nature there as here. Christ said to his disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you." So natural it was that they should believe it, that if it were not so he would have told them; but he hardly thought it worth while to tell them, since it was so. "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself." We see in these words the evidence that in the other life, as here in this, there will be homes prepared and made ready for us; that the friendships of this life shall not come to an end here. Jesus could not live in heaven unless he had his human friends to be with him there. He could not drink the cup of joy alone in the heavenly world. "I will come again to receive you unto myself, that where I am you may be also." If even that holy life required for its full satisfaction and completeness that its earthly love should be carried over there, and that he should not be separated from his earthly friends in the heavenly world, we may be sure that the same divine law will apply to us and those whom we love. And so we can feel safe and happy when the Lord calls us away, because we know it is the same infinite love which waits for us there which has surrounded us here; and that the same wonderful Providence which has arranged our human life will arrange our life in the heavenly beyond; and that the same sweet and tender affections which God has caused to spring up in our hearts below will be waiting for us also there.

These are the reasons, or some of them, my friends, for which I am ready still to call myself a Unitarian.

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 29]

THE DARK SOULS

AND

THE LIGHT.

FOR MEN AND WOMEN IN HOURS OF WEARINESS.

BY

REV. CHARLES F. DOLE.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and wpward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christanity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE DARK SOULS AND THE LIGHT.

For Men and Women in Hours of Weariness.

How delightful really cheerful rooms are! They are cheerful, not on bright days alone, but on all days alike. It is because the articles in them, the surfaces, and the walls reflect the light.

The fact is, there are articles which absorb light. They seem to drink it in and use it up. Certain surfaces, certain wall-papers, have this absorbent quality. There are other articles and surfaces which have the opposite power, to reflect. As the dark and absorbent surfaces prevail in a room, it becomes somber and even gloomy. You may, indeed, be comfortable in it on a very bright day, but in dark or cloudy weather it breeds melancholy.

The somber rooms and the cheerful rooms are like the lives of men and women. There are lives that are dark and absorbent of the light; they take and use it up, but they do not reflect and give it out. There are lives also of the oppo-

site type; in the gloomiest weather they still go on reflecting all the light there is.

There is this difference even among children. Go to a children's party. All indeed is bright and happy; yet there are children there who simply have to be amused and entertained. They take all that they can get, but they do not reflect; the brightness, the fun, the gayety of the party comes from others. There are those among the children who know the happy secret of making the party a success. They have not come merely to get fun and absorb light; they have come to give out and to reflect all the joy there is.

We enter certain houses and hear the conversation. What strange instinct leads quite intelligent persons to dwell on stories of trouble and evil, to love morbid things? Some persons seem to breakfast, dine, and sup on horrors; they cast a gloom over you as often as you call upon them; they may be good people, honest and conscientious, but they are dark souls, absorbing the light. There are others whose courageous cheerfulness never deserts them; in the most melancholy weather they find light to reflect; one would pick out their faces in the crowd as they pass on the street; their very smile carries an infection of courage.

The truth is, which many do not yet see, that cheerfulness is a distinct virtue, to be added to

all the other virtues, — justice, truth, and the rest. It deserves a place with the best of them. It is a duty, as much as telling the truth or paying one's honest debts.

Are not all these things, however, some one asks, purely matters of temperament? Grant that they are largely matters of temperament; grant even that they depend somewhat upon the measure of vitality and animal spirits; we may admit precisely the same thing about an ugly temper. The good temper, no doubt, is largely a matter of health. Do we excuse ourselves, then, for showing an ugly temper? Do we sit down and say, "We are made so, and we cannot help it"? On the contrary, the harder the temperament is, the more need that we do something to curb, train, and cultivate it.

The problem with our temperament, whatever it is, is like the farmer's problem with his land. Here is a man who has a piece of hard soil on the hillside. It is full of stumps and rocks. Shall he therefore sit down and starve? No. He grubs out the stumps; he builds the stones into walls; he drains his land; and by and by this difficult hill farm is bearing big crops. On the other hand, the man who has the rich, level land at the foot of the hill may be spoiling it for want of care; he lets the weeds get into it; he lets the drains become clogged, and the land grows sour and

useless. Men work just such changes, both upward and downward, with their native temperaments. We have the utmost sympathy with the men of the somber hues, but we are perfectly certain that there is no need of their remaining somber and melancholy.

Yet how can any one be bright and reflect light when the conditions and circumstances are somber? Conditions and circumstances, we reply, have much to do in making life, but they often seem to work exactly the opposite way to that which many would suppose. Here is some one who has plenty of money, an easy life, opportunities of education and travel, fair health also, — all the conditions, in short, which men spend their labor in struggling after. Here are women surrounded by luxuries, with no labor to soil their hands, with endless social diversions. Strangely enough, all these conditions do not make their possessors cheerful persons. Indeed, we have seen plenty of such persons whose presence sobered us. You will find more pessimists among people who have easy conditions than among any other class in the world. The more light that falls on these absorbent surfaces, the more they extinguish it.

Where, now, will you go for the most steady and serene cheerfulness? In the opposite direction from that in which we have been looking.

You will find the most genuine cheerfulness among hard workers, women with heavy cares, those who have met losses and bereavements, whose life has been checkered with disappointment. You will often find invalids and aged people who have this marvellous gift of reflecting the light. Such persons are like the rooms which remain cheerful in the gloomiest weather.

The fact is, the secret of life which we seek depends on our own will. In other words, it depends upon the way we turn, — toward life or away from it. For instance, among the furnishings of my room there may be a mirror, capable of beautiful reflection. It is a mirror, however, which can be folded upon itself and closed up from the light, and so rendered perfectly dark. So with the most admirable temperament, if it turns away from the light, if it shuts itself within its own conceit, egotism, or selfishness.

On the other hand, we have often seen a silvery gleam of light amidst the bushes and rocks high on the side of the mountain. Ascend to the spot where the silver sheen is; you will find only the dark stone wet with the rain water which trickles over it. Why, then, does the stone shine amidst its tears? Because it exactly faces the sunlight. So human lives shine which face life, which take all the light they can get, and reflect it back with utter abandon.

All this is a matter of will, of intelligence and determination. We may not be able to control our circumstances, but we can make up our minds which way we will face. We can choose, if we will, not to turn our surface away from the light; we can make a vow to face the other way, to meet life and confront it with all that it brings; we can vow not to absorb but to reflect all the light that we can find.

Does any one need to be shown that this is a duty? Is any one tempted to say, "It is my own affair whether I am cheerful or not"? Does any one think it enough to be honest and truthful? Does any one still deny that it is possible for a melancholy nature to grow cheerful? No one who really thinks can say this; for cheerfulness itself is a part of the truth. We say that we believe in God; we call this God's world; we even name ourselves God's children. If this is God's world, then, and we wish to live as his children, what is there to be somber or anxious about? We have not, surely, the care of the great world on our shoulders; we are not fighting a fruitless battle for a losing cause. We are men under orders; the Great Commander directs all; we march the way of victory. If this is God's world, then, why should we not be glad on the dark days and in the sunny weather, in the night as in the day? This is truth; this is to

make our lives and our faces conform to our faith. The opposite, moreover, is not truth. It is false to the facts, if "the children of a king go mourning all their days."

We also wish to be honest, to give every one his due. But what is due from one soul to another? What eternal debts are there of which money debts are only a parable? The greatest of all debts are in light, love, gladness, faith. It is not honest to take the light from heaven and shut it up within ourselves. The light shut up and taken out of circulation turns to darkness, and hurts our own souls. Only so much light comes from the sun; it is duty, then, to reflect it forth, to spread it, and make it shine.

The fact is, every cheerful soul carries a message. Reflecting the light, each soul says to us, "God is here; I come from God. You, too, are God's child; listen, and hear his message." Like the young girl who sings in Browning's poem, each cheerful soul goes everywhere repeating, —

> "God 's in his heaven; all 's well with the world."

If these things are so, — and they are as sure as the stars in their courses, — let us call for helpers and volunteers. We call for the children. Let them bravely face life; let them keep their faces in the way where light comes; let them reflect and spread the light, joy, and happiness

wherever they go. Their bright souls are wanted in every household to make sad hearts joyous again.

We appeal to grown men and women. Everywhere, in offices and shops and on the streets, the need is for men, strong and brave, who "look up and not down, forward and not backward, and lend a hand." They shall be God's messengers to redeem the world from its doubts.

In every home especially large-hearted women are needed. God save the home that has not one such bright, courageous, cheerful soul within it, to whom the children come with their sorrows to be gladdened, on whose love weary men depend!

Let us call for volunteers among the aged also. God bless the men and women who, having borne all life's vicissitudes, having grown old only in years, keep fresh and young in their hearts, who march on still with a smile on their faces, and when they take leave of this earth go forward as those who go to meet God, serene, courageous to the last!

SMOKE AND THE FLAME, THE

A Study in the Development of Religion. By Charles F. Dole

Size, 4 3-4 x 7 inches; pages, 230; price, 80 cents *net;* postage, 7 cents.

THE suggestive title of this book originates in the author's happy illustration of the undeveloped religious ideas of the early ages of the Christian era as the green fuel which gave rise to the dense theological smoke preceding the purer flame of higher and truer spiritual ideals. The gradually dawning modern conception of God and nature and man is seen to be "the slow coming to consciousness of the divine ideal of humanity when the life of the spirit submerges old theological barriers in its interest for goodness, brotherhood, and mutual helpfulness." The process and the progress of this growth in religious life and thought are traced step by step in the slow change of centuries from the old religion to the new. "The history of religion," as is well said in the introduction, "has been a wonderful development, like the history of art, of science, of government. We cannot understand the religion of our own time, much less know what we ought practically to do with it, and to which side, party, or church we belong, unless we know something of the long world-processes through which religion has passed into its various modern forms."

SERMONS

By James Walker

Size, 5 1-2 x 7 1-2; pages, 850; price, $1.00 *net;* postage, 19 cents.

THESE sermons were for the most part delivered in the college chapel to the students of Harvard University. A man of keen intellectual powers and great strength of character, Dr. Walker preached with deep conviction and abounding sympathy. Clearness of thought, force of logic, attractiveness of rhetoric, richness of diction, were all combined for the purpose of making plain his convictions of right and duty.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 30]

THE

MIGHTY CONTRASTS OF LIFE.

FOR THE PERPLEXED AND THE QUESTIONING.

BY

REV. CHARLES F. DOLE.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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MIGHTY CONTRASTS OF LIFE.

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THERE come times to the individual and the community when the contrasts of life impress us with wonder and awe. Immediately upon bright news and in the sight of happy lovers there comes the sudden stroke of death. In the midst of public festivities some terrible accident comes. What sort of a world is it, we ask, in which these opposites happen?

There is nothing more pathetic than the blind astonishment with which many quite intelligent persons look on this fact of contrasts. They take the good as a matter of course, but when the trouble comes they seem to be totally unprepared. They had never thought of this side of life before. Indeed there is something wrong in our whole system of education. There are actually growing up in many homes to-day young men and women who, as regards the deeper meanings of life, are hardly better off than if they lived in

the palaces of imperial Rome. University education which has taught many other things thoroughly has not begun to give to its possessors any serious philosophy of life. Men and women do not even know which way to look for the great consolations of religion.

There are two or three very simple considerations which deserve notice at the outset. First, about suffering and pain. Our generation seems to have gone to the opposite extreme from that of the early people. The savages practised their children in hardship and suffering. They taught them to expect pain and make little of it. The end in view was to produce toughness and heroism. On the other hand we take pain too seriously. We are too much afraid of it. We look at suffering merely from the point of view of our comfort and pleasure. The savage point of view was nearer to reality than this. We ought at least to know about suffering and pain, that they are much less terrible than the cultivated modern imagination makes them out to be in advance. Looked at from the other side, after we have passed through them, they actually sink into comparative insignificance. They are like the discomforts of a journey, which when we have reached home pass into forgetfulness, leaving us in happy possession of the positive results of our voyage.

Our generation, also, tends to make quite too much of the fact of death. It may be that the Oriental peoples, undervaluing human life, belittled death. In their opinion the individual existed for the sake of the tribe or the nation. If the family went on, it was little to them that the individual passed away. But we have doubtless gone to the other extreme. This is partly in consequence of the horrors of the mediæval theology, which made death man's enemy and a king of terrors. It shrouded the grave with the dread of future woe. We ought, by this time, to know better than the gloomy theologians taught. We ought to know that what comes to all alike, what most noble and heroic souls have always faced and must face, cannot be a real evil. We ought to let the good Stoics contribute to us something of their courage and to cease with them to speak of death, a physical incident, as a terrible thing. Solemn it doubtless is, but when the time comes, we will not run away from it like cowards.

We have said this without a word yet about religion. We have spoken merely from the plane of our intelligence. Add, however, to these considerations about pain and death one word of God or the immortal hope, and the whole level of their value is infinitely lifted at once.

Another important point needs here to be added. We are ruling out to-day all that bald,

artificial, and arbitrary conception of pain and death that regarded them as sent to man for his punishment or chastisement. The book of Job is full of the struggle of man's intelligence with this harsh doctrine of evil. The Almighty, men thought, singled out individuals for correction. Here was one who had already enjoyed too much of this world's good things. Here was another too happy in his friends. They must be disciplined by divers pains and penalties. It is no wonder that such a doctrine as this drove men the way of atheism. It is enough to say here that the intelligence of the world has got rid of this horrible alternative between atheism and an arbitrary deity. It is clear now that pain and suffering, losses and death, do not come by special decree for petty and personal reasons. They all fall under the workings of universal laws. The problem of life is no longer in the special and individual application of the laws. The great problem is with respect to the laws themselves. Are the deep laws of life worthy of a good God.

We pass on now to the more profound contemplation of the great contrasts of which we have spoken. It is no wonder if at the first thought of these tremendous contrasts many are simply dazed and bewildered. There seems to be in nature some strange principle of opposites and

contradictions. There is a side of nature kindly and beneficent towards man. But there seems also to be an antagonistic side, cruel and pitiless. When the good comes and while it lasts, we are easy optimists, we think the good always will remain; but when the stern side appears, gloomy and menacing, the mind is baffled and perplexed. Some here give up the problem altogether. So far as they think about it at all, they remain bewildered all their lives. It is inexplicable, they say; no one can understand it.

Nevertheless, this perplexed, agnostic attitude of mind requires something by way of practical conduct. What will you do with these great contrasts? Will you do nothing whatever? Will you sway back and forth from the light to the shadow? Will you accept suffering when it comes as if at the hands of a malevolent power? Will you think of life as one thinks of the face of the Sphinx? For practical conduct there must surely be something better than this. At the worst, and however bewildered men are, there is nothing so practical as to act as if good and only good ruled the world. At the worst, the one thing to do is to face towards the good, and to hope, however blindly, that the sun will shine again in one's way.

There are some, however, who try to evade the mighty fact of contrasts altogether. They tell

us that evil, pain, suffering, death, are only in seeming; the mind makes its own evil. The mind, then, by thinking can change the evil to good. Thus evil, so far from being real, is only in the mind of the sufferer. But this sort of easy optimism is too much like juggling to commend itself to many sane minds. The sane mind respects the facts, whatever they are; the contrasts of life have a certain strange fascination for it; it suspects some deep significance to be discovered in them; it boldly chooses not to have pain made other than pain. Love, too, at its best, will not ask to be saved from its due sorrows and pains. Love would not be love if it had nothing to suffer at the loss of its dear ones.

There faces us next a grim possibility to bind the contrasts of life together under the name of evil. It may be said that this is the worst possible world. It may be said that its joys, its sunshine, its love, only heighten the depth of its woe. Nevertheless, very few persons can ever be pessimists. There are facts which no pessimism can explain. The world that offered the spectacle of a single Christ-life, the world that has shown us that spectacle reincarnated thousands of times, — a world in which the deepest facts are justice, love of truth, devotion, and love, — has surely a heart of good amidst its encom-

passing evil. Pessimism will never stay in its blackness; it always drops back into the original contrast and dualism out of which it sprang.

Moreover, the prince of pessimists, Schopenhauer himself, would not bid us live and act as pessimists. Man himself must be better than his bad world. He must face the world; he must overcome its evil; where he found evil, he must leave good behind; in short, man must be a hero, not a coward, in this pessimist world. But this is not true pessimism. Translated into action, the highest law for the pessimist is to live and act as if man were the son of God.

We are driven along in our thought to the one opening left us. Religion offers to bind these tremendous contrasts together in the harmony of good. This is especially the modern mission of religion. For religion bids us face all the facts bravely. It does not ignore the mighty contrast; but it bids us also go over to the side of good, and contemplate the universe from that side alone; it pronounces the whole universe divine, and bids us trust it accordingly. What we call evil and what we call good, the warp of life and its woof, all together go to make the harmony of life.

There are plenty of suggestions and parables to illustrate and enforce this teaching. Nature is one continuous parable of contrasts bound into

harmony. The earlier men did not know this; science has assured us of it. Science has brought us an outward universe. The lower creatures and the higher alike, the storm-cloud and the glorious sunset, the earthquake and the fertile fields, all make up the universe.

Human art catches the same interpretation. The most satisfying picture is made of contrasts in color and thought. The painter delights in catching on his canvas the wildest and grandest scenery, — the ocean in a storm, the great mountains rising over the peaceful valley. The artist loves to contrast the ideal beauty over against the monotonous labor of the world. True art is that which binds the contrasts in harmony; true art out of the contrasts brings joy, hope, the sense of victory.

The great works of literature, the bibles of the race, have the same unifying power. The satisfying stories grow out of contrast. Never does the course of true love run smooth; all the more holy and victorious true love becomes. Take the contrast of life out of the great dramas, and they would fall into insignificance; their dramatic unity is built out of the law of contrast. Thus that which is best in art, as though prophetic of the deeper facts of the universe, builds out of the mingled joy and pain the lasting harmony of good.

This brings us to certain deep facts of human experience. There are facts about pain, suffering, bereavement, which we do not guess; we know. What has built up the mystery of personality in ourselves? What has constituted all that we hold most sacred in our lives? It is a certain law of unity building up our personality out of all sorts of mingled materials. I spoke of the way in which the discomforts of a voyage drop out of the memory. I speak now of something more significant. As we look back on our lives, there are many things which at the time seemed hard and cruel, which now we do not see how we could have spared from our experience. They went into the unity, into the structure of the personality. Seen first in the guise of pain, they appear now transformed into sympathy, into faith. Looked at, indeed, from the side of good, and of trust in the unfailing good, these things which we once called bad now look good.

There was a boy, sensitive and apprehensive, brought up under the shadow of the older theology. To this boy the worst possible thing seemed to have happened. He had sinned against grace and lost his soul. After months of mournful conflict he somehow felt his way to the side of good. He began to consider his own broken life from that side. There was yet duty for him to perform. Though his soul seemed to be lost he

would still live as a son of God ought to live. Though doomed to hell he would face the way of heaven. Behold! the boy had caught the secret of the eternal life. He had experienced religion without knowing it. For a thought had come to bind over the tremendous contrasts of his life into harmony and growing personality. Slowly peace came back, and at last gladness again, as of one who had seen the spectacle of evil overcome by good.

This has been in many forms a frequent experience. Men have faced the worst seeming evils, losses, disease, and death. From the side of evil these things could not be borne. They embitter men's lives. But men have faced all these things from the side of good. They have trusted the overruling unity, they have vowed to keep their faces towards the front wherever light might come. Men have never tried this secret and found it to fail. Harmony, unity of view, beauty, personality, have repeatedly grown out of these very contrasts which at first bewildered the mind.

I might illustrate how the life of the family and the home grows out of similar contrasts. In what home do its members love each other most? In the home surely where the family life has been checkered, where husband and wife have borne the changing vicissitudes, where old and young have toiled together to purchase the house, or

to earn an education. So surely as the various changes of life have been met from the point of view of trust in the good God, unity, joy, and peace have blessed that home. I might illustrate the same fact in the civic or the national life. It is the nation which passed through the birth throes of the revolution; it is the nation which paid the dire cost to free its slaves; it is the nation which has struggled to meet and solve the vast modern questions of political welfare, that is now slowly welded together into permanent unity. The national life grows strong out of contrasts, met and blended in a spirit of trust both toward God and toward men.

Let us see where we have come. We have found that there are two ways, and two only, of meeting the contrasts of life, which we cannot and would not shut out of sight. One way to meet them is from the point of view of the individual who suffers. It is the way of selfishness, of egotism, of evil. It exaggerates pain and makes the worst of it. Because love and joy have been, it emphasizes the present fact of loss. It broods over its injuries. It shuts itself up in its prison house. We have called this a way. But it is not a way. It leads nowhere except to bitterness or death. It bears a load for others also needlessly to suffer.

The other and only way is the way of religion.

It takes its joys when they come and thanks God. It takes its sorrows also in sublime trust that all will be well. It will never forget real joy and love. Where love has been heroism must ever be. Thus the way of religion leads the sufferer out of his isolation. It binds him together with all other human hearts. It binds him over to the life of God. It teaches him to take pain and transmute it into good. Where sorrow was, he learns to put the more sympathy, the more courage, the wider faith.

There becomes a great brotherhood of those who go the way of religion. They go shoulder to shoulder, hand in hand. One strengthens another. They will not let one another fall. "See," men say, to whom sorrow has come, "see how these neighbors of ours bore their sorrow only yesterday. They bore it like the children of God. Their faces already carry God's smile. Come, what they have done we will do likewise. We will take their way and go with them." Thus religion binds men together in ever strengthening bonds of unity.

Here is where we need a new and more thorough education for our children. We need a religion of emotion. But we need good thought, clear philosophy, that our emotion may be the more rich and full and stable. We need to believe ourselves, and to teach our children what

we sometimes say too glibly, that this is God's world and that we are his children. We need to teach them that this is the only conceivable method of sound thought, that this thought alone has any promise of making sense and unity out of the facts of the world and of life. We need more; we need to trust our beautiful thought at the touch of any trouble. We will venture ourselves as that thought bids us march. We will not be surprised, we will not let our children be surprised, if the night follows the day and the rain comes after the sunshine. But we will live as children of the day. We will bear the rain and the storm as those who are sure of the rainbow and the sunshine again.

All manner of divine voices bring us their message toward this grand solution of the contrasts of life. The voices of the noble past sound to us through centuries. "Listen," they say. "Who has ever trusted in God and found him to fail? Who of us has ever looked toward the light that it has not shone again?" The voices of good friends gone before us to their long home bear the same word. When trouble comes, they seem to speak very tenderly to us. "Listen," they say; "we too bore troubles and sorrows; we grew thereby more patient, noble, heroic; out of our troubles we loved God and we loved men the better. Stand with us now; take all that life

brings, turn your evil into lasting good." The voices of the present, of living men and women, of multitudes about us, call upon us. When we rejoice, they bid us share and spread our joy; when we lose and suffer, they entreat us all the more to pay the cost of larger love and deeper trust. The unknown faces of the future generations speak to us. What the great and good have won for us at cost of tears and blood, — their truth, their constancy, their faith in the living God, and their hope, — all the future generations beseech us to hand on to them unimpaired, enriched by the fruitage of our lives. All that is in us worthy and honest, — our reason, our conscience, our human love, the mysterious sense of the divine presence, — all the deepest experiences of our lives, harmonize together as we give ourselves to the sway of these voices, which are indeed the voice of God. As one of the poets sings to us, who knew well of what she wrote: —

> "God, thou art love; I build my faith on that.
> Thou hast led my path, and made light for me in the darkness,
> Tempering sorrow so that it reached me like a solemn joy.
> It were too strange that I should doubt thy love."

[No. 31]

Library of the
PACIFIC UNITARIAN SC
FOR THE MINISTRY
Berkeley, California

WORSHIP.

BY

REV. ROBERT COLLYER, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

WORSHIP.

"I WAS GLAD WHEN THEY SAID UNTO ME, LET US GO INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD."

THE man who was touched by this fine emotion was a statesman, a warrior, a king, and a poet, a man of a grand intellect and an exquisite genius. He had a great deal of work to do on week-days, and so might well have felt that he might be excused from attendance at the Lord's house on Sundays. But he does not want to be excused, any more than your healthy boy would be excused from his Thanksgiving dinner, or the lover from attendance on the maid who has won his heart.

"It is time to go to the house of the Lord," those about him said. "And I am glad of that," he answered, and went with them. None of our pleas about having something else to do, or being so tired with what we have done; no letters to write or papers to read, or headaches you do not have on Saturday and will not have on Monday; no fear of the dampness, or the dust, or the heat, or the cold you would not notice if you were in the thick of the week-day's work and saw your way to a splendid speculation or splendid fee. Only reasons, not excuses, can keep the man at home when the time comes for him to go to the house of the Lord; and then fair reasons must have taken the tinge of misfortunes if we are to judge from what he tells us otherwise of his longings to be there, and the motives that underlie these longings. His heart was there, no matter where he wandered or what he

had to do. The help he found there was his hiding-place from the storm, his covert from the tempest, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And so he was glad when the time came for him to go there with his brethren and companions, to hear the old psalms sung and the new, and moan out his prayers to the eternal, tender pity, and hear some word which would be as a lamp to his feet and a light to his path, and be aware, perhaps, that the glass was washed clean again by his tears, through which he was longing for ever, in his better moments, to see God; and then to go home, feeling some new pulse of resolution and aspiration beating through his soul. He had learned this lesson in his life, that this divine business of worshipping God in his temple holds a worth for the human spirit you can find nowhere else in the world; and that worship never hinders work, but helps it bravely along; and so he cries: "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."

Nor was his gladness slain by the feeling you find in a good many men to-day, which makes them ashamed to go into the house of the Lord, because they think they are in no wise fitted to meet with those who have managed to live true lives, to worship God; and so, for the sake of whatsoever things are true and lovely and of good report, they think they had better stay at home, lest they make bad worse.

This man had a skeleton in the closet, such as but few men have had to lock away, and the whole world about him knew it was there just as well as he did who kept the key. It was a woful piece of business, look at it as you will, and has survived all these ages to point the sneer of the scoffer, and to brand the man with inextinguishable shame. And Cowper was not more sensitive, nor George Herbert of a purer aspiration, than this matchless Hebrew singer when his better heart woke up within

him, and no man that ever lived was more resolute to call things by their right names. Nor can we make a more fatal blunder than to suppose that the pain and shame lay lightly on his soul as time wore on, or that he could consent for an instant to say another must bear his burden and leave him to walk with the saints in white. He was too honest a man to ask for such easy terms of release, or to do any thing but just to take the penalty, which, because "he was most noble and a king," must come in part through the shame he felt when he went into the house of the Lord with those who had clean hands and a pure heart. But he knew what we all can know, that the true place for the sinner is in the sanctuary, where the white holiness of God's truth can shine clear through our transgressions, and we can strive, through the pains of repentance, to be better men. On the steps of the altar he found the strength for striving, and was smitten by the sorrow which blooms at last into joy. He no doubt must have struck the experience of another and a worse king, who said to one of his chaplains: "When I hear your brethren preach, I am apt to fall in love with the preacher; but when I hear you, I fall sadly out of love with myself."

The man must find some place where God would find him, and bid his prophet scourge him and rub the salt of Heaven's own truth into the welts, and so hurt and heal by the same Divine process. He could not afford, as things stood, to herd with those who make a mock at sin, or roll it like a sweet morsel under the tongue; or to rest in the surmise that this is only priests' talk after all, when some grand curse is hurled against a great transgression; or to argue that if dirt is merely matter in the wrong place in the moral kingdom as it is in the material, you may cart it around the corner before you get through, and so make the odds even. I say this man was too honest to tolerate any such refuge of lies, and too brave to

care what the Pharisee might have to say in such a case about the publican. He went to the house of the Lord when this was his trouble, as you go to the good doctor, in the assured faith that he will pull you through; and so he was glad to go, though he knew it would hurt like fire. It was the only way left him out of the trouble; and better the knife to-day than mortification to-morrow. He knew he should find pitiful hearts there, and a godlike sympathy, and prayers blended with his own for a new life, and the end of all his pain.

> "When on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
> God makes Himself an awful rose of dawn."

And so he cries, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."

It is not hard to imagine again, that, with a heart so filled with desire to frequent the sanctuary, there would be no room for the poor and petty excuses which are still potent enough to hinder hosts of men from going to church, or to drive them away. These Hebrews, from what we can make out, for one thing, were tremendous meeting-goers — the very marrow of the Puritans in New England, down to the days of some who are here this morning. It is there you first find the fireless synagogue, no matter about the weather; and the cold bite they would hardly for shame's sake call a dinner; and the whole book of Deuteronomy as a catechism for the children; and precept and prescription at every turn of their holy day. You must not make a fire, you must not climb a tree or pick up a stick, or go one step beyond the Sabbath day's journey, or do twenty things young folks ache and tingle to do, especially if you tell them it is a temptation of the devil, when their eager, wholesome nature whispers it is no such thing. And the father of this man was one of the Lord's elect, and would train his boy like a deacon of the old

tenor. But there is one thing I notice the son will not do. He will not sow nettles on the old man's grave, nor count his sincerity, mistaken as it might be, for bigotry, and say, when he is a man in the thick of the world's business: "My father made me go to church so steady when I was a boy, and made worship such a burden to me, that I am bound to get even with him now; and I will not go at all." Of all the things a man can do in this direction, I think this may well stand first, to try and shame his own father, to whom, it may be, he cannot hold a candle in essential sincerity touching the soul's life and destiny. We stand behind a ghost when we make such a plea; but clear-eyed men, who have their wits about them, can see through ghosts, and they see through us, and know very well that, as a rule, this is mere make-believe. We do not go to the house of the Lord because we do not want to go, and the reasons lie in our own nature apart from any thing the old man may have done to us in our childhood and youth, and so, for the sake of the dead, we must not add sin to shortcoming by telling a pack of lies. It was hard, no doubt, on this boy, — the synagogue and the Sabbath, and the grim system of doctrine and dogma, and the silvered glass is not more sensitive than this poet's soul would be, or more potent to hold the impression. But no slavery to Sabbath and synagogue could make him say hard things about those who had done for him the best they knew, or could stay the grand, deep instinct heavenward. The church is as a trellis work on which the shooting vine will climb toward the sun. Many a bud was nipped, no doubt, and many a tendril bruised; but the son took the father's intention for the test of his action, and was of too high a mind to think of the trouble of his youth when he grew to be a man, and so he cries: "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."

I notice once more that it was the house of the Lord and its services, apart from its agencies, which held the man's heart in this glad thraldom; and he does not go there for the sake of the priest or the preacher, but to worship the Most High. The priest and the preacher may have taken some minor place, but if he was the man I think of, they could never be primal to him, or have the power either to draw him there or to drive him away. He went to the Lord's house, not to worship a man, but to worship God; and not to hang on human lips, but to hear the Divine word. So I doubt whether he ever took out his watch to see how long that prayer was, because he went to pray, and when the soul is lost in this grand, tender mystery, she knows no difference between four minutes and forty. He went, not to hear the singing so much as to sing; and when praise floods the heart and bears the spirit on its mighty tide, you are not over-troubled about the exact accordance of the trumpet and the shawm, whatever that may be, nor when you make melody in your own heart unto God, are you over-troubled if your neighbor is singing with a mighty fervor a little out of tune. Such things are all of minor moment to any soul bent on this high business; and when they either drive or draw too much, they point to deeper and more vital hurts than any they can compass. When I hear men and women say they cannot go to church because the prayers are too long, or they don't like the singing, I have to ask myself the question whether the objector goes to the Lord's house to worship or to be amused.

And if there was a man there who had some word to say touching the life that now is, and that which is to come — a man who could make God's truth luminous and penetrate the heart with it, and leaven the life, — there would be no question of this man's fitness to say that word, were he as homely as Abraham Lincoln, or spoke

with a voice untunable as John Foster's, or was as ungraceful as a jumble of right angles. All the better if the outward grace answers to the inner; but Paul had none of that, if we have got the true tradition, yet he was as the sun, and the rest as stars, and so the people answered to his light and fire.

The grand business on which this man was bound, when he turned his steps from his home to the temple, was to worship God; to sing praises to the Most High; to pour out his heart in prayer, and hear some word which would be to him as the bread of life; to be made strong for duty and brave for battle, and patient to bear burdens, and hopeful in dark days; to find joy in the depths of sorrow, and nurse his heart on the mighty truth that the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal; to grow ever more human and considerate, and catch glorious visions, and follow divine examples; and when this was the main motive there could be no hindrance in the minister or the ministry, on any narrow or petty grounds. He was a man with a wonderful broad sympathy also, and with a sure instinct for the central thing, — which is always the bread and never the baker, always the water and never the pitcher, — and so he cries, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."

Nor did he fall into the habit, which is growing common in our time, of saying, "There is no need for me to go into the house of the Lord. I can worship in my own house, in the woods, on the waters, or wherever I lift up my heart; the whole world is a temple to the devout spirit; prayer lies not in words, or praise in tunes, and service does not lie in talking. I have outgrown all that, and am now my own temple and my own priest."

It is a difficult and delicate matter to touch such a claim as this adversely, because it earns a large sympathy from

men and women who think as we do, while some of the divinest words our Great Teacher ever said edge that way; and some of the noblest men and women we have ever known have taken that stand, and have seemed to make it good by the pureness and beauty of their lives.

But may I not ask this question of the most of those who claim that there is no need for them to go to the house of the Lord — What do you really do in the woods, and on the waters, and in your own homes, and what does it all come to? Do the thoughts that stir the heart to praise and prayer, apart from the forms, invade your solitude and lift your spirit into a deep and sure communion; or do you not get entangled in the things of time and sense, — in your business, or pleasure, or your ambition? Does Nature reveal her beauty to you, and do you look from her to God, and drink deep at the fountains of her inspiration, and feel the sweet pulses of her life? Do you learn of the mother and then let her teach you of the Father? These are questions that almost ask themselves, and I do not think I overpass a fair judgment when I say that, to many of those who profess to be their own temple and their own priest, and to need no other, such questions have to be answered in the negative.

There is no quiet seeking for the inner life, no eager listening for the whisper of the spirit from on high, like that which has kept the whole world alive, and has held human souls steady and true through the most appalling terrors man can encounter. Do not mistake me when I say this. Here and there a man has got something of this spirit, but they are few and far between, while the drift is to doubt, and question, and make hope burn dim, and touch with paralysis the nerve of any grand endeavor; while with many more this own temple and own priest business is mere seeming, and the dumb things that run and fly worship God more truly than they do.

Now this man I have taken for my instance, this warrior, statesman, king, and poet, possessed a superb intellect, if we are to judge by its momentum after these milleniums. Ruskin has no more exquisite glance for the purple glory of the mountains; nor did Wordsworth cast a more loving eye on the meanest flower that grows; or Coleridge understand better how

> "He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small;"

or Goethe take it all into a wider and sweeter sympathy. Read those most noble psalms, and there you read his noble heart, and see that if ever one lived who could find food for worship in Nature, here was the man. He heard God's voice in the thunder, saw his glance in the lightning, and saw him come flying all abroad with cherubim and seraphim as the cedars swung and swayed in the mighty tempest; heard the whisper of his presence in the breath which just lifted the leaf on the slender spray, and said, as he heard the young lions roaring after their prey, "They are seeking their meat from God." He heard the small birds praise him as their songs stole through the lattice and woke him from his sleep, and confronted the earthquake with steady eyes when Lebanon was bowing to Carmel, because he knew what hand held their sunless pillars deep in earth, and kept the world steady and true through it all. Here, then, was a man who, of all men, could afford to say, "The house of the Lord is everywhere, there is no need to wend me to the congregation on Zion; other men may need such services — I don't. I possess the genius which kindles its own fire. Worship lies to me in the glance of the eye and the ever-open heart. Let those go who need such help; I can commune alone."

He had no such subtle foe to fight, or had got it under. The old deep instinct for worship in the Lord's house,

which had come down from the far-reaching ages, held good, and he would not go back on that instinct, or damage it, any more than you would crush rare heirlooms of your family under your heel, or burn them in the fire. The good of it had been revealed a thousand times in his own experience, when he found his life "like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh," and he could not make naught of such experience, any more than you would fling fine bread or fine fruit into the gutter.

Or he might be able to worship alone as a man who had outgrown times, places, forms, and gatherings. But there were some millions of people about him who must cleave to these things, or they would lose track of the better life, and wander on hopeless and helpless all their days. So because he was human and considerate, he would help to maintain these things as one of the noblest boons he could confer on his kind; and the very first element in such maintenance was his own personal presence. For he might talk about the good of such things for those who need them to doomsday, and pour out money to maintain them like the prince he was, yet if he said, "Go to church," and did not say, "Come to church," they would see through the sham and leave the place to the owls and bats. He had no such intention. His heart was in it, and that made the yoke easy and the burden light.

"Why don't you resign?" William Lloyd Garrison said, some years ago, to dear old Dr. Putnam, of Roxbury. "You are getting old; why do you keep on preaching?" "I will tell you," the Doctor answered. "If I quit preaching I shall have to go to church." It was a natural fear. How could he stand such preaching as he must hear, — he who outranked us all as a preacher? He did resign, however, but went to church all the same, just as long as he could drag the half-dead limb after him. It was all so deep in his nature, and so needful, that he must

go; and then, to stay home, had that been possible, would have been to put an interrogation-mark against all the church-going of a lifetime; to affront and grieve the whole heart that was still loyal to the sanctuary.

And then, above and beyond all this, this man, with all his genius, and insight, and supreme rank among men, felt, I doubt not, that he could not afford, for his own sake, either to stand alone or go alone, even in this Divine business. He must be with his human kind when he drew near to God; stand on the common earth with them; let his royal robe brush elbows with the artisan's jacket; feel the human presence close and warm about him; and here in the sanctuary, he could find them about the feet of God, longing and striving after the better life, where prince or peasant wore no badge and took no precedence. And so he cried, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."

So, with a great longing in my heart, I desire to stand with all my brethren, of every name, in the urgent plea they make for the presence of all those who feel there will be help for them in the house of the Lord. Nay, for those also who do not feel this assurance, but still know they need help, or those who would fain help others, though this is all they can find in our service or day. Are you borne down by the burden of your sin, and feel as though it was a shame to meet with those who have no such trouble? Never mind; if there is help for you anywhere on the earth it is in the house of the Lord; and there is help for you here beyond all question. Do you think you could do better alone? I doubt that, but if I was sure of it I would still say: Who are you, that you should do this, when by your presence and hand and heart you can help so many who cannot go alone, and help us also to help them? Is God not to be worshipped in the woods and sweet country lanes, and in the hidden nooks

of the hills, and on the mounts, that are all Mounts of Transfiguration to the devout heart? Surely, surely. But I will say that the most holy place is that which has been made holy through the mighty cry of human hearts in their sore trouble; where men and women have found peace through believing; where the perpetual appeal is made for the soul's highest welfare; and where the light is kept shining high and clear toward the everlasting life; where the Christ is for ever incarnate in the Christian heart and life; where we can find the angels in human guise; and under it all and through it all, worship the Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, — whom no man has seen or can see, — God over all, blessed for evermore; and say with our whole heart, as the good, sweet day comes round, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord."

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 32]

OUR MISSIONARY WORK

BY JOHN D. LONG

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and wpward forever.

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OUR MISSIONARY WORK.

BY JOHN D. LONG.

I LIKE this idea of missionary work right here at home, and I care very little under what banner it proceeds. I am not much afraid of what our various sects denominate, in everybody except themselves, false doctrine, if only it be honestly entertained, and if there is candor enough to reject it when its falsity is made apparent. It will be time for any of us to call another's doctrine false when we can ourselves, with any confidence, assert that our own is true. False and true are relative terms, and I shall probably know very little about the false till I have arrived at the absolutely true. Let us remember that the false is often a lame step towards the true. A grand thing, indeed, it would be, in a catholic and hopeful spirit, to regard all reaching of the human intelligence and soul as a growth along the whole line towards the truth. Let us not despise or dread honest and inquiring error. How have the sciences of medicine and astronomy, how have the progresses of social life, the causes of education, of health, of legislation, been advanced, except by deduction from error and the hard discipline of blunder!

I preface this because I regard our mission as only a mission, not an end; as a very humble, but intelligent and fearless, means, which in God's providence is doing God's work, and seeking God's truth, along with other means, — some better, perhaps, some certainly not so good, and all poor, compared with the future possibilities of Christianity. It is a mission fit here and now, because the mission of our liberal faith has always been not so much to the ignorance of remote heathen as to intelligence and com-

mon sense and spiritual attainment, like those of this rare and excellent New England community. It has been a twofold mission, and I am not sure that in one of its two directions its work, as a distinctive work of its own, is not approaching completion. For a century, more or less, it has been a very ploughshare in the hard and bitter soil of a severe theology; which hid the smiles of a tender Father always behind the frown of an offended and averted Deity; which robbed human nature of its worth and dignity, and which substituted the skeleton of a technical and complicated scheme of injustice for the warm life of the domesticity of man with God. It has let in on all this sunlight and gladness and cheer. It has mellowed even the shadow of death with the tints of a golden sunset of promise. It has left its imprint not more in its own ranks than in ranks outside its own. Its results are hardly more Channing and Hale and Clarke, than Brooks and Stanley and Murray. Its influence is not more patent in the fruitful graft of the Methodist Collyers than in the earnest work of the revivalist Moody, who seems almost of another faith than that of the revivalists of fifty years ago. I want no more generous and comfortable atmosphere than pervades the churches of so many of our neighbors, who differ from us to-day less in spirit than in name, and from whose number our own ministry is now and then supplied with many of its shining lights.

It has been a good work, — that of our liberal faith in this direction; and, maybe, in this direction its most effective labor is done. It is not for us to say that the time is not near when it will itself no longer guide the advance, but in its turn follow some brighter torch, some more incisive lead. Be that as it may, the other element of its mission it can never exhaust. Its crusade against narrowness of dogma over, the better and endless work

of being a live, vitalizing, inspiring, practical, constant, permeating spring and flow of Christian character and love and faith in the world should absorb its endeavors. Science, scholarship, brains, will take care of the letter and the doctrine; let us have now the full measure of the spirit and the life. Let us preach the sweetness of faith and duty, more of the soul of Jesus, more of the spiritual exaltation that lift the conduct, the thought, the hope, the act. Would there were divinity schools turning out classes of young men all richly and mainly educated in spiritual grace, as our academies turn out boys drilled in Latin exercises! Would that our churches might glow more with the warmth of religious kindling, echoing less with the puzzles of the modern schoolmen! Would that the hearts of men and women might be touched, their lives guided, so that Christian civilization should be not the husk of a euphonism, but the full corn in the ear of Christian living; and that we could feel assured that *our* faith were indeed making us better and holier; moulding our relations; guiding our walk; entering into our business, and even our politics; directing our education; reforming our reforms; enlightening our treatment of the criminal; attacking our intemperance; sanctifying and spiritualizing our ambitions; making our religion not a form, a habit, a convenience, but something bountiful and large and imminent; making our churches places of worship, and training us, through Christ's sweet example, into loving, trusting, obedient, and pious children of God, — blessed, because gentle in spirit; meek; hungering and thirsting after righteousness; merciful; pure in heart; peace-makers; and persecuted, if at all, for righteousness' sake! From my soul, I believe we have nothing like the gospel of Jesus. Our church, having dissipated shadow and gloom, must not, and will not, fall short of the substance. That substance is that gospel, — the life, his-

tory, words, character, example, faith, and, more than all, the principles of Jesus, which all appeal to the heart of humanity, as no abstraction can; and by clinging to which, and dwelling on which, and preaching which, and endearing which, other churches reach men as sometimes we do not. Let us, too, throw out one more anchor in this same deep and restful haven. Not an iota less of intelligence and reason and truth, but a world-full and a heart-full of the spirit of him who through his own has linked our souls so palpably to the divine soul, that the avenue to the Father's love and benediction seems to lie straight through the tender heart of the Son.

HYMN.

BY JOHN D. LONG.

I WOULD, dear Jesus, I could break
The hedge that creeds and hearsay make,
And, like thy first disciples, be
In person led and taught by thee.

I read thy words, — they are so sweet;
I seek the footprints of thy feet;
But men so mystify the trace,
I long to see thee face to face.

Wouldst thou not let me, at thy side,
In thee, in thee so sure, confide?
Like John, upon thy breast recline,
And feel thy heart make mine divine?

PIONEERS OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN AMERICA

Being the Great and Thursday Lectures Delivered in Boston in Nineteen Hundred and Three

Size, 5 1-2 x 8 inches; pages, 396; price, $1.50 *net;* postage, 13 cents.

THE purpose and scope of this volume cannot be better shown than by giving the subjects and authors of the thirteen chapters which make up its contents. These are: I. "William Brewster and the Independents," by Edwin D. Mead; II. "Roger Williams and the Doctrine of Soul Liberty," by W. H. P. Faunce; III. "Thomas Hooker and the Principle of Congregational Independency," by Williston Walker, IV "William Penn and the Gospel of th Inner Light," by Benjamin B. Trueblood; V. "Thomas Jefferson and the Influence of Democracy on Religion," by Thomas R. Slicer; VI. "William Ellery Channing and the Growth of Spiritual Christianity," by William W. Fenn; VII. "Horace Bushnell and Progressive Orthodoxy," by Washington Gladden; VIII. "Hosea Ballou and the Larger Hope," by John Coleman Adams; IX. "Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Teaching of the Divine Immanence," by Francis G. Peabody ; X. "Theodore Parker and the Naturalization of Religion," by James Eells; XI. "Phillips Brooks and the Unity of the Spirit," by Samuel A. Eliot.

The chapters making up this book were delivered as lectures in Boston in the spring of 1903, and attracted much attention. The purpose of the lectures and of the book is to set forth some of the great principles through which religious freedom in this country was achieved, and the connection with these principles of the great men who advocated them and gave them their power and enduring vitality. These thirteen champions of religious freedom were truly pioneers in the work in which they became so conspicuous, and no one can so fully realize the significance of our present freedom of thought in religious matters as by reading these accounts of the inception and growth of the religious principles which constitute so valued a part of our religious inheritance.

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THE WORD OF GOD.

"THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT BOUND."—2 Timothy ii. 9.

WHAT is the word of God? I suppose the ready answer from most people would be, "It is the Bible." Ever since the Protestant Reformation, when the infallibility of the Church, or the Pope as its head, was shifted to the Bible, and IT became the supreme authority in all matters of religion,—ever since that great change took place, it has been so common for Protestants to speak of the Bible as the "word of God," that the impression has grown up with us; and without much thought about the matter, we have taken it for granted; but when we turn to the Bible itself we find, to our surprise at first, and to our great relief afterwards, that *it* presents no such view of the word of God, but one vastly higher and grander.

The name generally given to the Bible, in the Bible itself, is *scripture* or *scriptures*. "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears," "Search the scriptures," "No scripture is of private interpretation," and the like. The Old Testament Scriptures are also called "the law," "the law and the prophets." There are nearly forty places in the New Testament where the sacred writings are spoken of as scripture, or scriptures. But the phrase, "word of God" is used, not to denote any sacred writings, but something far deeper, even a direct communication from the divine mind. When the "word of God" came to Nathan the prophet, bidding him bear a message to

King David, it is not meant that any sacred book came to him, but that God bade him speak. The word of God was the will of God revealed to him at the time. Indeed, the common prophetic announcement is, "The word of the Lord came to me," which tells, not of any word that had been spoken to another, and recorded, but of a living word freshly spoken to the listening soul. So in the New Testament, as when Luke tells how "the word of the Lord" came to John in the wilderness, and he came into the country about Jordan, preaching. It was no parchment-roll that came to him, but an impression he believed divine, which sent him forth as the herald of one greater than himself. And when *he* came, whose shoe's latchet John felt himself unworthy to unloose, in him, it is said, "The word was made flesh." This living word of God which spoke to prophets and holy men, so *filled* him, and he was so obedient to it, that it became incorporated into his very being, and so was made flesh. Paul gives the same thought in another form when he speaks of Christ as God "manifest in the flesh." The spirit of God so filled him that his whole life in the flesh, his life of love and labor for God and man, was a manifestation of God's life and love. So the "word of God" the Apostles preached was a fresh, *living* word. The old Jewish Scriptures in which they were educated were sacred books, containing records of the "word" as it had come to the fathers; but their contact with Jesus had made them feel that God was close to them all the time, always speaking to listening ears and willing hearts. Even the old Scriptures contained rich prophecies of a still richer outpouring of the Spirit; and so they waited for the fulfilment of the promise; and it came, — came as fresh tides of the Spirit; not from old reservoirs, but from the open sea, lifted by celestial orbs.

When it is said, "Man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of

God," that the Apostles "spake the word of God with boldness," that "the word of God increased in Jerusalem," that "the Gentiles received the word of God," that the "whole city came to hear the word of God," that the "word of God is quick and powerful," it is plain that something more was meant than any recorded word spoken to the fathers. It was a living word. It "*grew*," we are told, and "prevailed" over men's hearts, as a present power of God. Jesus spake with deep reverence of "the law and the prophets," said he came "not to destroy but to fulfil," — to fill full; but when the hour for parting with his disciples came, he did not point them *back* to any *recorded* word of God, as if that were their sole guide, but forward and up to the Comforter, the spirit of truth, whom the Father would send to guide them into all truth.

So when we hear him pray, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth," we must rise with him above all thought of parchment-rolls, and Scripture records, to the *living* word of the *living* God, which was in the beginning with God, and was God; which had spoken all along through the ages, and will for ever speak; which was the constant light and life of his own soul. It was this living word, fresh from the living God, he prayed might sanctify them and make them free.

Paul, who had learned from his own experience that God had not spoken his last word, could say with the unction of personal conviction, "The word of God is not bound," —or "bound up," the brave apostle of liberty would doubtless have added, had he foreseen that eighteen centuries after men would limit the "word of God" to any Scripture, however sacred, old or new.

This scriptural view of the word of God is important for many reasons.

It liberates the Scriptures from the necessity of infallibility, which the old views of plenary inspiration imposed

upon them, and which has proved a stumbling-block to so many honest and earnest seekers after divine truth; and so enables us to read and study them with entire freedom, and with the full and rightful exercise of the reason which God has given us.

A great change has taken place during the last quarter of a century in regard to the Bible. Formerly the great question between the conflicting sects was mainly one of interpretation. Nearly all accepted the Bible as an inspired and infallible guide. What does it teach? was the great question. And so various, not to say conflicting, was that teaching, that it was not difficult to find textual support to almost any opinions that might be honestly embraced. But more and more, of late years, earnest and serious readers of the Scriptures have been forced to see that there were many things in the Bible that could not, with any propriety, be called the "word of God;" that every thing between the two lids could not be rationally regarded as equally inspired, or equally instructive. It was the Scriptures themselves that revealed their own mixed and miscellaneous character to the thoughtful reader. A breach once made in the old wall of infallibility, which had so long guarded the Bible against free and rational thought, a flood of criticism, reverent and irreverent, has rushed in, which has seemed to threaten for the time the destruction of all confidence in the book itself; and to sweep away all the old and revered foundations of faith and hope. So it has *seemed* to some; but so it will not be. God lives; man lives; the Bible lives; and all that is most inspired and inspiring in its pages will be sure to live also. The Bible was n't given to enslave the reason, or the conscience, but rather to set them free; and make them more receptive of that real *divine word* which still speaks to the waiting mind and heart. It does not ask us to come to its pages with reason blindfold, and conscience dumb: "Come," it

says, "let us reason together," "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" If there be a book in the world to be read with the eyes wide open, and the whole soul awake in every faculty, it is the Bible. It is when the soul is most inspired with the spirit out of which the best portions of the Bible flow, that it most clearly discerns that spirit in its pages, and most easily distinguishes between the divine treasure and the human casket which holds it. The Scriptures contain truths of unspeakable value; they have come down to us on the waves of God's great Providence, freighted with inestimable treasures; but the treasures are one thing, and the ark of gopher-wood which holds them is another. Well may we duly reverence the ark itself, and be rightfully jealous of its preservation from any rude hand that would loosen its timbers by one untruthful or irreverent blow. But reverence for truth itself, and for that real word of God which is before and above all Scripture, charges us to discriminate between the ark of wood so long in building, and upon which so many workmen of different ages were employed, and the precious freight of moral and spiritual truth with which it has replenished and enriched the world.

The Bible will not be injured by any *rational* and *reverent* criticism; and that is the only kind that will have weight with thoughtful minds.

Of one thing we may be sure, that the leading scholars and thinkers who have been engaged in Bible criticism, which has often seemed so destructive, have not been doing it in the interests of unbelief and irreligion, but in the interests of *faith*, and a religion based on surer supports. They have been most earnest students of the Scriptures they have criticised; and while we may not agree with all their conclusions, reserving for ourselves the right of judgment, we may not for a moment doubt the sincerity of their investigations.

But suppose it be admitted that the leading results of these patient workers in the scriptural mine, in regard to the origin and growth of our sacred books, and the mixed character of their contents, be essentially true. Suppose Genesis and Geology never can be reconciled. Suppose that the earth is six million years old, instead of six thousand, and that long before the scriptural date of Adam, the earth was peopled with human beings, — as Professor Winchell of Michigan University has just written a learned book to prove. Suppose the first ten chapters of Genesis are not to be taken as literal history, but as a collection of mythical traditions, with a meaning. Suppose there never was a flood so universal as is there indicated, or a God so vindictive and impatient with his erring children as to think that the only remedy was to drown them. Suppose the whole story of the ark, which goes to pieces so easily under close scrutiny, should prove to be not a narrative of facts, but an ancient allegory. Suppose Moses was not the real author of the books ascribed to him, they being the product of a later age. Suppose the old story of Joshua causing the sun to stand still at his word, be only a significant myth, instead of an unbelievable fact. Suppose that it was only in parable that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Suppose that of only a few of the sixty-six books bound together in our Bible, it is possible to tell with any reasonable assurance, just when, or by whom they were written. Suppose that in both Testaments traditions, legends, and myths mingle with, and color, the leading facts related, just as they do in all the early histories of different races, sacred and secular. Suppose that inspiration itself does not imply infallibility, and that no book, however sacred, may ever be appealed to as of absolute authority. What then? The real word of God remains untouched by these admissions, and the precious old Bible is still full of nourishment for the higher life.

But it will be asked, "What is the Bible worth, if it be not infallible? Without infallibility we are all afloat, and have no anchors down anywhere." This objection, perfectly natural, and most sincerely made, overlooks the fact that the divine method of educating the race, in *every other* department of knowledge, is not by infallible books, or infallible teachers, but by books and teachers which reflect the best light of the past, and stimulate to fresh study and research for the new light yet to be revealed. Indeed, to be *anchored*, in any other branch of knowledge, except religion, is not thought at all desirable. Anchored ships can only hold on where they are, and swing lazily with wind and tide; to do their legitimate work, — the work for which they were built and launched and rigged, and provided with a costly outfit, — they must *weigh* anchor, set sail, and head for the open sea, trusting to such knowledge as they are able to gain from charts *not* infallible, and compass *not* free from variations; and reckonings not above mistakes; all needing to be *rectified* by daily observations of the log, the chronometer, and the heavenly bodies too, if they would make the voyage in safety. Why should we not expect it to be so in religion? Why should we look for infallibility *here*, when we find it nowhere else?

Of course there are times and places for anchorage, — snug harbors of faith and trust, where the tempest-tossed may lie safely, till the storm of sorrow and trial abates, and the sunlight again breaks through the clouds. And these blessed coves of rest are open to us all along the rock-bound coasts of life. But surely human souls are not made, any more than ships, to lie at anchor, with flukes buried in any blue clay of infallibility, however good the holding ground. Man has a momentous voyage to make, in which, if he be wise, he will use the very best charts, from the most *recent* surveys; the best compass, with all the variations of careful observers marked; but *relying*, not on chart or compass

alone, but upon his own cautious judgment, his good common sense, and upon the knowledge freshly gained each day from *celestial* observations.

We can hardly hope for a rational appreciation of the real value of the Bible, and a rational use of its varied contents, until we take it for just what it is, and judge of it reverently, but honestly, by its contents; not by any theories which men as fallible as we have devised of its infallibility, but by its intrinsic worth, as an aid and perpetual incentive to the divine life. We need to learn the art of reading these sacred books, not to stultify our reason, but to stimulate it; not as taking the place of God, but as leading more closely to him, that we too may hear his voice, for ourselves, and know that he is as close to our hearts *now* as ever.

For this we have history, poetry, prophecy, proverb, gospel, epistle, apocrypha, and apocalypse. For this we have the lives of patriarchs and prophets, seers and holy men, and men unholy too, to teach us, by their wisdom or folly, how simple-hearted right-doing always exalts the individual or the nation, while sin is the sure and everlasting reproach of both; for this we have the words and life of him, "the brightest and best of the suns of the morning," who spake with that kind of authority the human heart always recognizes,— the authority that carries its own sanction, and wins, not by dictation, but by a divine persuasion; who lived that matchless life of unselfish devotion to the highest, which shows us how "the Son of man" and the "Son of God" become one, so revealing our own high calling, as children of the same divine Father, called to the same divine sonship.

All this, and more than I have time even to indicate, we find in the blessed old book, to stimulate, quicken, and inspire our higher natures; to lift us up out of selfishness and sin, and to fashion our souls in the divine image.

But when we find, as we shall, in these ancient books, written in different periods of the world's history, for peoples remote from us in culture and surroundings, — when we find things local and temporary, belonging to an age that has long past, or things which indicate a lower plane of life, and lower conceptions of God and man than those to which we were born, or have attained, we are not obliged to rack our brains, or strain our consciences, to reconcile things irreconcilable, or to accept as divine what our moral sense rejects. We must read with discrimination; not as if every thing were alike valuable for us, but exercising our reason and common sense, as in other matters. We should feel free to go into the rich fields of Bible thought, as the bee goes into the flower-garden, selecting such flowers as yield the greatest amount of material to be wrought into the winter's store, not deeming it wrong to skip juiceless texts, any more than for the bee to skip juiceless flowers. Has God put an instinct into the bee to teach it what flowers are best for food, and has he given to man no method of telling what truths will best nourish his higher life? We do great injustice to the lectures God has given us in supposing there is no faculty within for telling what we most need for building up a true and noble character.

What should we think of the shipbuilder who should go into the old forests for timber, and, instead of taking his moulds with him, and selecting such trees as suited his purpose, — this straight tall trunk for a keel, that curved one for a stem, those branches and roots for knees, — should sweep every thing clean as he went, and have it all transported to his ship-yard, without regard to fitness of construction? We have the ship of character to build: the old Bible forests are full of the trees of divine truth, the growth of ages, for our use. What though there be here and there a decayed tree, and some living ones not adapted to our use? If we know the sort of character we want to build,

if we have any true model, or ideal of the life God would have us live, and the character he would have us form, then let us take our moulds with us into the Bible forests, and select the very best timber we can find there, working it into a ship of character, fashioned after the pattern shown us in the mount of our highest and clearest vision, — a ship that will breast the fiercest storms of life, unharmed, and bear us safely across the sea.

This is really just what intelligent and thoughtful readers of the Bible do, whatever be their *theory* of the divineness of its every word and letter. One in sorrow does not turn to the genealogies of unknown Hebrews, whose only record is that they lived, begat, and died, thousands of years ago; but with the sacred instinct of sorrow, seeking comfort, as sure as that of the bee seeking honey, he roams over the rich fields of divine truth, lighting now on a sweet and comforting Psalm, then on some lofty, prophetic strain, that lifts the soul out of the ruts that sorrow has worn, and again on a beatitude that cheers as the voice of God. Now sitting with Jesus in the upper chamber, hearing *him* tell of the upper mansions, and again with Paul as he sings his triumphant song of victory over death, or with John, on his sea-girt isle, as he tells his vision of a "new heaven and a new earth," where all tears are wiped away. And so it is, that practically, all thoughtful readers of the Bible *do* select; they *do* discriminate; they *do* seek freely, for what their souls need. It is the plain dictate of common sense; and the pity is that their *theory* of Scripture is not such as to sanction and justify their practice.

So used, there will always be found, in the illuminated pages of the Bible, something for every joy and every sorrow; something for all classes, all conditions, and all experiences of human life. And if in any conceit of modern knowledge we should ever think that we have drunk those old fountains dry, it will not be because *they*, but *we* are shallow.

Still it is true that "the word of God is not bound." No Scripture can hold it all. And we need to bear this truth in mind, to attain any just conception of the nature and extent of that word.

At a meeting of the American Bible Society, held in Boston, some time since, I heard a gentleman say of this Bible: "It is the only word God ever spake, and the only word he ever will speak." Dear man! he meant it all in reverence for the book, and seemed utterly unconscious of the irreverence to God, of such a thought. For, what sort of a God would that be who could be found only in old records; — who did speak once, to a few Hebrews in Asia Minor, and again to Jesus and his first followers, for a little while, only a little while, almost nineteen centuries ago, and has ever since been dumb? Never a word since the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy at the birth of this world; never a word from the very genesis of things to the present hour has God ever spoken, according to this theory, save what we find recorded in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Just think of it! Ponder it a little! Turn it over in your thought, and then say if that be the God you believe in; the dear Heavenly Father, more ready to give His holy spirit unto them that seek it, than the earthly father to give good gifts unto his children. Now, this scriptural view of "the word of God" we have been trying to present, scatters all such hereditary delusions, and gives us a living God, whose unbound word is as free as his own spirit, and as far-reaching and many-tongued as his own divine love.

We have scarcely learned the alphabet of that word yet. It runs not only through the Scriptures, as a river of life, making those old writings, spite of all the earthy matter mingling with the stream, a fountain of healing waters; making the Gospels, especially, a Bethesda, in which crip-

pled humanity, in all phases of its moral weakness, has found restoration and strength; but it is written on the rocks also, and the man of science and insight says "Here too is a word of God." It is inscribed upon the stars so legibly, that a devout looker-up reads, as in a book, as the Hebrew poet did, "The heavens declare the glory of God." In all human history the divine voice is heard; in solemn warning against sin; in sweet encouragement to virtue; in the mysterious providence that guides each individual life; in the sorrows and joys, in the woundings and healings, that visit us; in the monitions of conscience; in the whisperings of the Spirit to the inward ear; in the shame we feel for our unworthy living; in the aspirations of our better nature for a nobler life,—in all these and innumerable other ways of which we are but dimly conscious as yet, God's word comes home to us with its sacred message of redeeming love, calling us up out of a mere animal life into that which is spiritual and eternal.

This living word of God is as old as creation, and as new as the last accent of the Holy Spirit. Not only the Jewish patriarchs and prophets heard it, but Buddha also heard it; Confucius heard it; Socrates heard it; while our own Lord Jesus not only heard it, but so followed its high behests, so wrought it into the fibre of his daily life, that in him, as we have said, it was made flesh, and the waiting world beheld the glory of a true son of God.

This brings the Heavenly Father into real and vital relations with his earthly child, and gives us an assurance of "God with us," here and now. It makes of the "word of God" a volume never closed, but wide open, as long as there is a listening ear to the divine voice. I know of no truth more deeply religious than this. It shows the human soul to be indeed the temple of God, and man the real child of the Eternal, in whose image he was created. Without this truth religion is only a tradition, needing external

vouchers, historic evidence, and for ever at the mercy of biblical critics. With it the evidence is within the soul, and the *experience of its power* is the natural miracle that assures us it is divine. It is a reconciling truth; it lifts us out of the region of negations into what is affirmative and positive; it is at once the most conservative and the most radical of truths; it would hold on to every divine word in the past, gleaning reverently from all sacred writings, heathen as well as Christian, while it would still look *on* and *up* for every fresh communication of the divine will. It is easy to see how pre-eminently fitted this truth is to unite all branches of the living vine. It lifts us up out of the letter that killeth, into the spirit that giveth life. Dogma divides, it is the life of God in the soul that unites. All living churches must be fed and inspired with the living word of the living God. Give us this, and we need not be afraid of the results of any earnest and reverent Bible criticism. It is the pruned vine that bears the richest fruit. No pruning-knife can ever injure the *unbound* word of God. The Father's voice may still be heard in the soul: —

> "The word unto the prophet spoken
> Was writ on tables yet unbroken."

Only let us keep the tables of the heart plastic to the finger of God, and the inward ear open to his voice, and we shall never be without a witness of his presence and love.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 34]

HAS UNITARIANISM DONE ITS WORK?

BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

HAS UNITARIANISM DONE ITS WORK?

1 Cor. 8:6. — "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

I read in the *Independent*, a few weeks since, an article written by the minister of some church in the West, the purpose of which was to show that Unitarianism has done its work, and is no more needed. He admitted that when it first came it had a work to do which needed to be done, which was to oppose what he called hyper-Calvinism — which I suppose means ultra-Calvinism. But that work being done, and there being now few or no hyper-Calvinists, Unitarianism has nothing left for it to do. This writer adds, to make his case stronger, that most of the Unitarian churches in the West are dead, and that those in the East are dying.

I have, therefore, thought that it might be well to examine this question, and to ask whether the work of the Unitarian denomination is done, or whether it has anything left to do.

And, in the first place, I must express my doubt whether the work of this body was, at first, exactly that which this writer represents it to have been. I do not think its main work was to oppose hyper (or ultra)-Calvinism, but to oppose the whole system called Orthodox, and especially to oppose Calvinism pure and simple. I question whether there is such a thing as hyper-Calvin-

ism. Genuine Calvinism, as taught by Calvin himself, as set forth in the Westminster Confession, as held to-day by the whole Presbyterian Church, goes as far as anything can go in that direction. To make this plain, let us ask what is Calvinism.

1. Calvinism, as set forth in the creed of the Presbyterian Church, declares that "the guilt of Adam's sin was *imputed*, and his corrupt nature *conveyed*" to all his posterity, so that we are all, by nature, "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." This is the doctrine of original sin and total depravity.

2. This corrupt nature, inherited from Adam, makes us all guilty, so as to deserve "the wrath of God," and "all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal." Hence it is taught that men, women and children who are not converted will go into hell, there to suffer torments forever. This is the second point of Orthodoxy — the doctrine of *everlasting punishment.*

3. The third is, that man is utterly unable to convert himself by any effort he can make. He can only be converted by Divine favor. This is the doctrine of *irresistible grace.*

4. As man can do nothing to convert himself, and as God must in every case do this work, it follows that if some men are converted and saved, and others not, it is not because of anything they do, or omit to do, but only because God chooses to save some, and does not choose to save others. This is the Calvinistic doctrine of *election and reprobation.*

5. The fifth doctrine essential to Calvinism is that of the vicarious atonement. This means that, in order to enable God to forgive penitent sinners, it was necessary that a Divine being should suffer in their place, and so make satisfaction to the offended justice of God. Justice

being satisfied, the Divine mercy was then able to forgive those whom God had selected and had converted by his irresistible grace.

This is the substance of Calvinism. Anything less than this is not Calvinism. If you say that man is not wholly evil by nature, but that there is some good left in him, then by that goodness he can help to convert himself; and consequently it does not require irresistible grace to convert him. He also, in this case, helps to make his election sure, and so the Calvinistic doctrine of absolute Divine election drops away.

Now, this scheme of doctrine is essentially held by all the great churches which claim to be Orthodox. The Presbyterian churches of the whole world have just met in a council in Philadelphia. They all hold as their creed the Westminster Catechism. The council refused to relinquish this creed or alter it. They declared it to be, in the main, just what they believed.

Talk of ultra-Calvinism! Can there be any statement more barbarous than this: Every child born is born totally defiled and sinful, in consequence of the sin of the first man and woman. He is created by God totally evil, for God, I suppose, not Adam, is, after all, our creator. God having thus created us totally evil, will punish us with eternal sufferings for being so created, — except a few, or many of us, who are chosen to be saved, not because we are better than others, but simply from a Divine caprice. This is the doctrine of simple Calvinism, not of ultra-Calvinism. This is the doctrine of the creed held by all the Presbyterians in the United States, and by every Congregational church which claims to be Calvinist. It is held by the vast majority of the Baptist churches. The ninth article of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England and Episcopal Church of the United States declares that for the original sin which is

in every man's nature he deserves damnation. Another article teaches, with equal plainness, the doctrine of election. And, in truth, we may say that, of all the great churches called Orthodox, only the Methodist Church has, from the first, opposed and resisted Calvinism. Let the Methodists have that credit.

No doubt very many preachers, and a vastly greater number of laymen in the Orthodox churches, do not believe any of these Calvinistic doctrines. But, as churches, they accept them all, proclaim them all, and, whenever they meet in conference or council, defend them all. For it is a curious fact that men, as members of an ecclesiastical body, will insist on retaining doctrines which they have long since given up as individuals. Thus you will scarcely find a minister of the Church of England who will admit that he believes the Athanasian Creed; and yet no convocation of that body has ever been willing to surrender it. It is so in the Roman Church. A large number of delegates to the Vatican Council went there wholly opposed to the doctrine of Papal infallibility; yet in the final vote only one or two voted against it.

So long, then, as such doctrines as these stand in the creeds, and so long as the churches refuse to modify them, it seems to me that the work of the Unitarian denomination is not complete. It is bound to declare that little children are not born totally depraved, corrupt, and exposed to the wrath of God. It is bound to teach that if we inherit evil tendencies from those who precede us, we inherit good tendencies too; that if every wrong action increases the tendency downward, every good and right action adds to man's tendency upward. We are called on to teach that inherited evil may be, and is, a source of depravity, but cannot be accepted as guilt. Depravity which is born with us, and which runs in our

blood, is not something to excite God's anger, but much rather his pity. Unitarianism is still needed to proclaim that God is the Universal Father, who has no partialities, no favoritism, whose sun shines on the evil and good, and whose rain falls on the just and unjust. Unitarianism is wanted to oppose the Calvinistic view of the Eternal Father, as being unchristian and false to the teaching of Jesus. It is needed to resist the dark doctrine of an eternal hell, and to declare that it is the Divine purpose to save every man from sin and misery just as soon and as much as the man himself is willing to co-operate in his own salvation. It is needed to teach that no honest error can be accounted a wrong in the sight of God; that he desires all men to inquire freely, to look for all truth, to think for themselves, and that God values sincerity far more than he does Orthodoxy. And Unitarianism is also still needed to teach with greater emphasis than ever before that the only way of salvation is by a good life, and that in the great day of account we shall not be asked what we have believed, but what we have done; and that he who has fed the hungry, clothed the naked, who has been faithful, honest, pure, and true, will stand higher than those who only make loud profession; or those who lay stress on church, ritual, ceremony, and a precise orthodoxy of belief.

One of the purposes for which the Unitarian body was formed was to declare the simple unity of God, as against every form of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is nowhere taught in the Bible; it was unknown to the apostles and the early church; it did not appear until three centuries after the death of Jesus; it was a compromise between the monotheism of the Jews and the polytheism of the Greeks and Egyptians. It has been a stumbling-block and an obstacle in the church; it has confused the minds of worshippers, thrown a mystery

around the simple gospel of Jesus, and is contrary to all sound reason.

I know that this doctrine, too, is fading slowly out of the Christian consciousness. It is really believed in the old church form by a very small part of intelligent Christians of all denominations. It is explained away into a philosophical symbol by very many who claim to be Trinitarians. Yet every Sunday, in every one of the two or three thousand Episcopal churches in the United States, worship is addressed to a being unknown to the four Gospels, or the Epistles of Paul, Peter, James and John. Christian worshippers in their solemn prayers call for help on the "Holy, Blessed and Glorious Trinity, three persons and one God." No doubt they mean to worship the God and Father of Jesus Christ, the one, only, Supreme Being. But in so sacred an act as prayer is anything right to be said and repeated which tends to confuse the mind of the worshipper, and to divert the thought and heart from Him who is "the one God and Father of all, above all, and through all, and in us all"? So long as this continues, the Unitarian protest has not become obsolete.

But the negative work of Unitarianism is the smallest part of what it has done. It has taken a new view of Christianity, and has taught that view to all Christian denominations. We are taunted with being a small body. The pioneers in an army are a small body compared with the whole army corps. The acorn is a small body compared with the oak. But the few pioneers enable the whole army to march onward. Out of the little acorn is developed the majestic oak. And so Unitarianism, by teaching that Christianity is not a creed or a ceremony, or an emotion, but a life, has turned the Christian Church in a new direction. By declaring that the glory of Christ was not any metaphysical consubstantiality with

God, but a Divine holiness, generosity and self-forgetting love, it has caused Jesus to be revered and loved as never before. It teaches that religion was made for man, and not man for religion; that Christianity is here to save, bless, and comfort men in this life; to bring peace to the troubled soul; to bring freedom to fettered minds; to inspire hope, manliness, courage; to awaken the human mind to progress; to create a better civilization; and not to appease the wrath of God, or make an atonement to his justice, so as to bring it into harmony with his mercy; not to enable us to escape the wrath of an angry God hereafter, and avoid the torments of a future hell. By giving this nobler view of the purpose of Christianity Unitarianism has given a new impulse and a new life to the church. It has opened to it a new and better future. It has answered in the best way the arguments of unbelievers by taking from them their motives for unbelief. It has emphasized goodness as the essential element in the teaching of Jesus. It has denounced the heresy which disdained human goodness as being only mere morality. It has restored the original glory of the Gospel, which consisted in making humanity the sister of piety. It has taught that the service of God is perfect freedom, and that there is no sight on earth so well pleasing to God as an honest, truthful, generous, self-forgetting man or woman.

Is this work done? Is there not need of more of it? I still hear of popular preachers who declare that bloodshed is the one central idea of Christianity; that the goodness of God consisted in pardoning man when he had chastised his own innocent son in his place. I still see ecclesiastical bodies excommunicating men who think that the Book of Genesis or the Book of Kings was written a few centuries later than has commonly been supposed. I still see the letter of the Bible exalted above

its spirit, and an outcry made if anything is said against its geology or zoölogy, or geography, or chronology. I see that it still requires courage in men belonging to the Orthodox churches to suggest that the Father of all Mercies does not maintain in some part of the universe an eternal hell in which to torment his children forever. I find sensible women teaching in popular novels that a little child which has been baptized is safer if it dies than if it had not been baptized; as though God were an evil being who wished to hurt it, but was prevented from doing so by the charm of a little magical water. Here, to-day, in the heart of Christendom, these calumnies against the Infinite Father are still honestly taught to his children. Is there not needed one denomination at least to resist and oppose them?

There is a wide and growing estrangement in most Christian countries between the advanced thought of men and their religious faith. One of the most dangerous symptoms of the time is the manifest hostility of science to religion, — the alienation of thinking men, scholars, writers, from the churches. In France, England, Germany, this is more and more the case. Here, in New England, down to this time, a different spirit has prevailed. Our historians, our poets, our scholars, our scientific men have been believers in some rational and liberal form of Christianity. Am I mistaken in thinking that the teachings of Channing, Walker, Dewey, and their brethren have had much to do with it? I cannot but think that their generous views, their trust in freedom, their exaltation of the Gospel to the universal plane of humanity and love, has helped thinking men and women to remain Christians.

Yesterday I attended the funeral of my friend and classmate, Benjamin Peirce. He was the greatest mathematician in our land, perhaps in the world; one of the

first astronomers of the time; a man so profound and far-reaching that few were able even to follow the course of his thought. Brought up in the Unitarian church, he remained faithful to the last to his religious convictions. He was an humble, trusting, loving, but free and rational believer in the Gospel. In his mind, science and religion were one. His was no cold materialism, but his thought was filled with the life of the soul. His science was inspired with spiritual convictions, and reached upward to God and to immortality. If Unitarianism had any part in producing such a result as this, does it not deserve to be maintained?

The first Unitarian church in America was established in Boston less than a hundred years ago. Other Unitarian churches then came, till Boston and Massachusetts became the centre and fountain of this movement in behalf of liberty, humanity, and reason. Here, also, in Boston, began most of the reforms, benevolent and philanthropic, which have distinguished our time — reform in education, the temperance societies, anti-slavery societies, prison discipline reforms, and movements to help the insane, the blind, and all human sufferers. Was this an accident, was it a chance coincidence, that where the religion of moral reform was taught, moral reform followed? The leaders of these reforms have often been Unitarians. Horace Mann, the leader of the educational reform; Dr. Howe, the friend of the blind; John Pierpont, the fearless advocate of temperance; Dr. Channing, the champion of freedom; Dorothea Dix, the reformer of prisons and insane asylums; Theodore Parker, the advocate of the slave, — these have all been Unitarians.

And is it an accident, a chance coincidence, that the church which stood for freedom of thought should have had the honor of producing so many of the leading thinkers and writers of the country; historians like

Bancroft, Hildreth, Prescott, Motley; poets like Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell, Pierpont, and many others? If not, then is it desirable that this source of thought and action should be dried up?

Many of our young people, who have grown up amid these advantages, may not realize what they owe to such influences. Unitarians in Boston sometimes leave the Unitarian church and go to some other church, if they happen to find the preacher more to their taste. They have a right to do so, and if it is a question of religious life, they ought to do so. But before doing this, they should ask whether they do not owe something to the cause which these Unitarian churches represent. Is it only a question of personal satisfaction, or is it not also a question of truth, of freedom, of progress, of humanity?

I do not claim for Unitarianism any monopoly of liberal and rational religion. I gladly see that in all denominations great numbers are to be found as independent thinkers, as free from all superstition, as any of ourselves. I thank God for the vast progress made in this direction within the last fifty years. But, in other churches, men have to struggle long for their liberty, and only the strongest can attain to it. "With a great sum they obtain this freedom." But we Unitarians are "free-born." Other men have labored; we have entered into their labors. Those who have fought their way out of the narrow limits of their old belief, and broken the fetters of Orthodoxy, long retain the scars of that severe conflict. Often there remains in their soul a sense of bitterness, a feeling of prejudice against the old faith, which may easily carry them too far. Ought not we, who have been taught from childhood to see only in God our dearest friend, one not to be feared, but loved, who have been taught to read our Bible with perfect freedom, and to

see in Jesus a Master because he is most full of all truth and all goodness, — ought not we to be grateful for this opportunity and education? And ought we not to do what we can to give to others what we have received?

Hitherto, the Unitarian body has wanted organization. It has run to individualism, and has needed more of co-operative methods. It was the object of the conference recently held at Saratoga to introduce among us more of this organic life. A few years, I think, will find our churches much more united, active, and efficient than they are now. We do not want union without freedom, nor freedom without union; but what we need in the church, as in the State, is freedom and union, one and inseparable.

When I entered my ministry, the first thing almost that I heard from my Orthodox friends was, that Unitarianism was dying out. That same piece of information I have been receiving ever since, and that is what we are still being told to-day. When we saw at Saratoga some 1500 Unitarians who had come from all parts of the country, drawn by their interest in their common faith, it did not seem as if our denomination was rapidly approaching its end. But, however that may be, our business is not to ask whether we are prosperous, but whether we are right. It is not popularity we are seeking, but truth. No movement which has lifted the world, reformed society, helped in the progress of man, has ever been very popular. For a long time its supporters have struggled with opposition; they have been a feeble people; they have been taunted with their small numbers, their little influence. But if they had the truth on their side they cared not, but went forward, sure of ultimate triumph. The honest man, the man who loves the truth, does not wait till popularity and success arrive. He is

willing to share in the day of small things, knowing, as Emerson says, that when the single man plants himself on his instincts, the great world at last comes round to him.

"For to side with truth is noble, when we share her meagre crust;
Ere her cause brings fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside;
Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified."

STEPS OF BELIEF

By James Freeman Clarke

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AN able advocate's successful defence of Rational Christianity against Atheism, Free Religion, and Romanism. In a vigorous, unprejudiced, and frank way the author emphasizes the cardinal doctrines of the Christian religion while at the same time undermining the positions upon which these three opponents of Rational Christianity take their stand.

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 35]

THE

KINGDOM OF GOD.

BY

REV. E. E. HALE.

BOSTON:
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand. — MATT. iv. 17.

THAT is the reason why they are to repent: — Repent ye, for the kingdom of God is at hand. The reason is forgotten by many of our modern exhorters. But it was distinct when the Saviour spoke and when his apostles spoke. Yes! and when they prayed, as he taught them to pray, their first prayer was for this "kingdom of God," "Thy kingdom come."

What he taught them, and what they believed, was that a real kingdom of God was to come in this world that they lived in. And when the Christian church, in any of its simpler or more intelligent moments, falls back on the foundation truths, this is what it teaches now: that God can reign in this world, and that he is to reign here. It does not so much discuss the origin of evil, as proclaim the overthrow of evil. All things bad, mean, cruel, painful, distressing, unjust, unclean, untrue, shall cease to be. God shall reign. God's kingdom shall come. Just as, in the heavens above, planets move as his law directs, — comets come and go, suns and worlds revolve, in precise obedience, — so the time shall come that in this world, which we choose to call the world of man, every thing shall obey his purpose. Why not? Man is his child, and like him. Man and man's doings, the earth in all its methods, shall obey God. God's kingdom shall come.

And this is the one appeal for repentance which the Christian revivalist makes "Repent ye, because this kingdom of God is at hand."

It seems to me that this is a proper subject of address in the opening of a Conference of Liberal Christians, because the very words of the text explain just what the Liberal Church is for. It exists in the hope of bringing in this kingdom of God. We here, so far as we are banded together in one body, are united that the kingdom of God may more quickly come. As an organization, as a separate church, the Liberal Church has no reason to be, and no right to be, excepting this wish and the determination which springs from it. Other communions, other churches, have other objects beside this object: but this is our only object. In the methods of other communions, the coming of the kingdom of God is a business of more or less comparative importance. With us it is the only business. It is of paramount and all-covering importance. It colors all our preaching, all our tracts, all our papers, all our talk, all our every thing. Because paramount, it engages our attention as a specific and absolute reality in the business of such a Conference as assembles here.

Here were these apostles sent out, you would say, almost with no preparation, to proclaim glad tidings. What are their glad tidings? What is this gospel? The glad tidings are in this very announcement, that God is to reign now, in this world: that the kingdom of God is at hand. Paul goes up and down through all the coasts of Judea, through Asia Minor and Greece, proclaiming glad tidings; that he had something good to tell. What was this something good? It was, that the kingdom of God was at hand. He and they, in their eagerness, thought that this perfect reign of God would come sooner than the hard fact has proved. It has taken a little longer

than they thought, to overrule and to turn backward all the courses of evil. But I do not think it any such misfortune, that a preacher of good tidings should be sanguine in that direction. Better put God's kingdom a little too early, than put it off indefinitely far. A pity that later times of the church have freed themselves so placidly of that eager certainty. A pity that any age should settle down into the feeling that God's kingdom is coming,—yes, is always coming, and never close at hand; as if it were coming as to-morrow is always coming, which never comes: coming in a certain Pickwickian sense, but in no matter-of-fact sense, such as belongs to the affairs of men Now, Paul and the rest preached that it was coming, as a man might tell you that next Christmas is coming, or that the foreign mail is coming. There would come running up into the square of some Greek town, an eager messenger to call the men lounging there. "Come here; here is a man proclaiming good news, glad tidings." "Good news! What is this good news? Come along, Marcus, come along, Stephanas, let's come and hear his good news." What did they hear when they came there? They heard that God himself was going to reign, and that right soon. Men who came from homes where their children were sick and in agony from pain, heard that God was to reign, that pain was to be done away, and health to be the law. Slaves who were certain of nothing but stripes, and men who lived by bitter alms, heard that God was to reign; every child of God was to have his own home and be protected in it. Men who yearned to know more than they knew, to understand something of the marvels around them, were told that God was to reign; and every child of God be helped by every other child, in the best training, in the best education, to learn all that man could learn, and know all that man could know. Yes, and this weeping mother, and her silent husband there, as they stop

to hear the preacher, while they are carrying to its resting-place the little urn which contains all that is left of the body of their child, they stop to ask about the glad tidings, — to be told that God reigns; that there is no death; that this is only an outside shell which has fallen off; that the dear girl is immortal. It was clear enough to those people, in those days of eager preaching, what the good tidings were.

But what would be the experience of Marcus or of Stephanas to-day, in one of our large towns, if a messenger came running to call them to some new-comer preaching "glad tidings," which had not been heard before. Suppose they found the preacher and listened. If he were one of my Episcopalian friends, his first statement would be, in substance, —

"Dear friends, you will be rejoiced to know that I have brought some books with me, which that great and good man, King Henry VIII., prepared for you three hundred years ago, in which are written down your prayers for you; and you will all be delighted to know that regular worship will be conducted according to the forms in these books, at such and such a place, at such and such a time."

Or, if the preacher were a Roman Catholic priest, his good tidings would be, that they should not longer be worried about their opinions or the selection of their duties, nor to decide between right and wrong. They would be glad to know that the Bishop of Rome had appointed another bishop, who had appointed a priest, who would be ready to tell them what to believe and what to disbelieve, what to do and what not to do, what to read and what not to read, how to vote, how to pray, and in general to direct life for them.

Or if the preacher were one of our Baptist or Methodist

friends, the probability is, that he would instruct Marcus or Stephanas how to save his own soul, how to secure his own heaven. And if Marcus stopped in the instruction to ask, "How about that riff-raff of rascals down at Hell Corner yonder, or Sodom?" there is danger that he would be told, "Now you disturb this meeting. My business is with you; I am to teach you how to face 'the wrath of the Lamb.'" I am told that there are no Calvinists now; and I hope that that is true. If there were a Calvinist preacher, and Marcus or Stephanas ran to hear him, his good tidings would be: "Dear friends, save yourselves if you can, by faith in Jesus; for the good tidings are, that most of you are predestined to be damned."

Mark me, I am not so unjust, nor such a fool, as to say, in either case, that this is the only gospel these men have to preach; but I say that, as things are, and as a preacher of either of these communions feels called upon to begin the announcement of his mission, here is his first gospel; such is his paramount doctrine; it takes precedence in his thought and in his preaching. He comes before a new community with such an announcement that a novice in that community would suppose that he had something else to proclaim than "the kingdom of God is at hand." Now, in the preaching of Jesus Christ, and in the charge he gave to his apostles, the paramount thing said at the beginning is "The kingdom of God is at hand." This is the glad tidings. To this, all things else in the appeal are secondary. Repentance even is conditioned on this truth. But, in the modern preaching of the sects, the kingdom of God is made secondary. In the spirited and sincere work of our friend Mr. Moody, the first appeal — and, so far as I see, the characteristic appeal — is to the individual man to save his own little separate soul; to turn him back to the poor selfishness of worrying about that. I think you have all observed, that, when in the true Christian

spirit, Mr. Moody gave himself up to the Christian work of averting intemperance, for instance, in any community, men stopped and looked at that, as if it were an exception in his regular business, — as if he had turned aside from his regular path. But the truth was, that here he was in the distinct line of Christian apostleship and Christian appeals, to which all else is exceptional or secondary. Preach to men to "repent;" yes, but for what reason? Why, because the kingdom of God is at hand!

Now let us come down a single step in history. Let us compare this early preaching with what has come out of it. Let us try the tree by its fruits. These men said the kingdom of God was coming. Was it coming? Were they right, or were they wrong? Does God reign to-day in any realm where the devil seemed to reign then?

When they said God was to reign, some mocked, and others went off to their old lives, saying, "We will hear thee again of this matter." That is much the way in which most people take preaching now. People thought it was a fashion of exaggeration, as they talk now about the rhetoric of the pulpit. It was an Oriental phrase; or it was a fancy of a fanatic. The preachers did not, indeed, go into much detail. They were satisfied to say in general that God was to reign. And they were received in that indifferent way. Would things have been better had they spoken in detail? Would more credit have been given to them?

Suppose that some Agabus, with the spirit of prophecy, had said, "I will speak in detail. The Master did great things. But he said to those who came after him, 'Greater things than these shall ye do.' Do you not know what he means? I will tell you a little part of what he means. He means that the diseases shall be trampled

out, of which you and your children are dying. And I tell you that this leprosy you are talking of shall be unknown among Christian men, but as a curiosity in a museum. I tell you that the plague and the black-death shall cease, and be studied among the doubtful matters of history. I tell you that the average life of man shall be three times what it is to-day. I tell you that God shall forbid pain in surgery: that the curse of Eve shall be undone; and women shall bring their children into life without agony; that beneath the surgeon's knife the patient shall sleep serene. I tell you that, in the same way, God means that the word 'slavery' shall be a word without meaning in this world; that every child born into this world shall have every right and privilege which the strongest prince or richest lord can claim for his children. I tell you that God's reign will bring about the end of war and arms. Why, there shall be nations to whose extent your Roman empire is but as a province; whose people, generation after generation, shall never see a soldier in battle array. I tell you that God means to put an end to starvation and want: he means that there shall be nations of men who need not know what the word 'hunger' means. I tell you that God is to reign in such nations in happy homes, in which, from infancy to manhood, no child ever feels a blow; in which the peasant who drives the plough is as sure of all that makes life blessed and happy as the sovereign upon his throne. I tell you that in such lands men shall pay their tributes as their own proud gift to the government they love and are; shall insist on paying them, as kings insist on making gifts to each other, worthy of their thrones. I tell you that, under God's kingdom, there shall be nations which know no limit but the very ocean; which shall agree to live united and not in discord; as the Master says, 'They all shall be one.' They shall agree to lay their divider

opinions before one master tribunal. They shall maintain no separate armies; one only for the united empire, to give this tribunal power. There shall be no barbarian; no bondsman; no stranger. From ocean to ocean, every man, because he is man, shall have every privilege, whatever his language, his color, or his worship. Yes! and Jesus Christ shall so reign over the world,—in laws which grow from his laws, in governments founded on his word,—that, literally, from north to south, from east to west, farther than the Pillars of Hercules; farther than those people of the east, who are clad in silk, and send us spice and sugar: there shall be no island so separate, and no desert so parted, but that men shall know the paramount power of the nations which are called, however unworthily, by his name."

If any prophet had said that, in Ptolemais, or Ephesus, or Corinth, or Athens, your practical Roman, your cultivated Greek, however eager for what is new, would have left his seat before the man was done his raving, he would have turned from such a babbler in scorn: he would not even have said he would hear him again. Yet a thousand times more than this—as you know—is already true. It is true, because Jesus Christ sent those men on that errand. It is true, because they stuck to their errand, and sought nothing else. They made it their paramount business to proclaim the glad tidings; and the glad tidings are, the reign of God in the world of God's children!

The same work is the work of Christendom to-day, in this critical moment of the fortunes of the world. This is what the Liberal Church of to-day, what the Liberal communions stand for, glad tidings, and not sad tidings. Glad tidings; the absolute and real coming of the kingdom of God. This is their paramount office. It is in practice, in our communities, what "differences" them from other communions.

That is to say, the first work of a liberal church, in any region, is to bring that region up to the standard of the kingdom of God. And a liberal church has no right to be, there is no sort of use in establishing it, unless in the very "hard-pan" of its foundations, there is the determination of those who found it, that it shall "level up" the place in which it is, and bring it nearer to that standard of the kingdom of God.

Simply stated, if what you want is elegant ritual, you had better go to the Episcopalians, and be done with it.

If what you want is an old statement of duty, authorized by the traditions of many centuries, you had better go to the Greek church, from which, when it was old, the first of schismatics, the Roman church, broke away. Go there, and be done with it.

If your eagerness to save your separate little souls be any mere selfish — and, therefore, petty — eagerness for your individual comfort in the infinite future, go to Brother Moody; and be done with it.

If you want to live in a close ecclesiastical coterie, — to buy your groceries from one of "our people," to have your child taught her letters by one of "our people," to go and drink tea with a party all of "our people," go to our Baptist friends; and be done with it.

But, if you want to work, first and foremost for the reign of God in the hearts of men, and in the world's affairs, come into the Liberal Church, and you shall never be done with it!

To form a new church in any community is a great thing, but not a difficult thing; for, when two people come together in a Saviour's name, — though it is better when three come, — there is a church there, for all purposes, He is in the midst of them. Now it may be granted, that, in planting such a seed, the first necessity is, that it throw

out roots. You must not look for stem, leaves, or flowers first. Roots first, and these afterwards. Still, for heaven's sake, let nobody forget that leaves and flowers, and eventually fruit, are what the seed is planted for. If a church only roots itself, it might as well not be. The coming of the kingdom of God is the object, and the only object, for which this church is founded. Not simply the proclaiming or prophesying the coming, but absolutely the bringing it in. It is to hew down the mountains and to fill up the valleys; that is what the church is founded for. He that prepares the way of the Lord is greater than he who only prophesies it. And so, even when a new-born church is forming itself, while it is throwing down its roots and getting strength, every genuine man and woman in it, who is in earnest about it, ought to be asking, "What can we do to bring God's rule into this town?" "Whose fault was it, for instance, that those children died of *cholera infantum* last night in Swett Street?" "What could have been done to prevent that drunken fight at the corner grocery?" "Could we have done nothing to rescue that poor factory-girl who committed suicide yesterday?" What could we do, what could this church do, in such instances as this, where the devil seems to have succeeded, so that in his place the God of Love might reign?

To say the truth, the languor, not to say the failure, of our decorous, but somewhat slow system of church administration, comes in, in proportion as we forget or neglect this original object of all church organization. People say of the Unitarian church that it wants enthusiasm, — that it must hunt up some object for its attacks, to awaken the enthusiasm of its young men and maidens. Object enough, if it will only hold to the original object, and bring in the kingdom of God! The failure comes where this object is kept out of sight, by some miserable piece of fussy method which, for the moment, takes the

place of it. A young man, startled and glad to be startled, by finding out that he also is God's child, and has God's work to do in the world, comes to you in the joy of that discovery, and offers his maiden service in the great army. And you give him his post, — by telling him you would like to have him sell tickets among his friends for a strawberry party, which is to provide the means for carpeting the pulpit stairs. When you treat your first recruit so, you have no reason to wonder that the second recruit is long in coming. Let the recruits see that you have an object no less than God himself has! Let them see that the object of your church, first, second, and last, is no less than to bring nearer the reign of God in that town.

And this also is to be said in no rhetorical, nor yet in Scriptural language. It is to be said in detail. What you want is the enlargement and the victory of Moral Power. For instance: I know a village in the Green Mountains — I dare say you do — where the separate selfishness of men has been so tamed, where the powers that rule are so wise and so strong, that the whole village is one beautiful park, — really more lovely, more picturesque, more attractive, than, with all his wealth, the richest nobleman in England can create around his home. To make beauty like that in the surroundings of home, is the worthy object of the Christianity of a town. And it is quite within the power of the Christian men and women of any village in New England to achieve a victory like that, when they so determine.

I know, and you know, communities where the management of public amusements is not left to the accidental drift of wandering showmen, — but where the best and most highly cultivated people in the town take the personal oversight and preparation of them. I could name a town where every adult, man and woman, except the very

aged, was a member of the well-organized club or society which provided for all that town the fine music, the bright plays, the lectures, and other entertainments for its winter. Now it is in the power of the Christian men and women of any village in New England to achieve a victory like that, when they so determine.

I know a town, and many of you know it, where manners are so pure, and life so simple, that when, once a month, its elegant town-hall was filled for a really social party, the committee carried their invitations to every cabin, as to every palace, in the place, — and it has its palaces as it has its cabins. Now it is in the power of the Christian men and women of any village in New England, so to maintain cordial friendship among neighbors, and so to train in decency the growing children, as to achieve a Christian victory like that, when they so determine.

I know a town, and you know it, where a laboring man, whose daily duty takes him to the hardest toil, at the end of eight hours of such work, or ten, goes to the room which the public provides for him, to find waiting at his table, in his work-room, the costly mathematical treatises which the public has bought for him, to carry forward there the studies which you and I cannot begin to appreciate, because we cannot begin to comprehend them, and to conduct his correspondence on such themes with the most distinguished mathematicians in the land. Now it is in the power of the Christian men and women in any town to give such direction to its public arrangements that such a victory as that shall be possible, whenever they so determine.

I know a town where the watchfulness over every child born into it is so absolute, that literally not one child escapes the luxury of an education. The officials watch for each child of God as for hidden treasure indeed.

And literally every child who breathes God's air is sure at least of intellectual culture, such as in other lands prophets and saints have longed for, and have waited for, and have died without the sight. Now it is quite within the power of the Christian men and women of any town so to arrange its methods of public education as to achieve that victory, when they so determine.

I know a town where the simple health regulations are so well enforced that the average age of man, if the experience of many recent years is to be taken, is sixty-seven years, — well nigh the mark of three score and ten indicated by Moses nearly forty centuries ago. So many tears which have never flowed! so many little graves which were never opened and never closed! Now it is quite in the power of the Christian men and women of any town in New England to enforce God's reign and law in the mere matter of health so as to achieve such a triumph as that, when they so determine.

I know a town — more than one town, thank God, and so do you — where the Christianity of the place has so triumphed over man's greed and man's lust, that for years on years no open bar for the sale of liquor has existed there. For a generation the boys and young men there have grown up, not tempted by that wretched delusion which most quickly steals away life and manhood. Now it is quite within the power of the Christian men and women of any New England town to achieve that victory in its borders, when they so determine.

I know a county in New England, as so do you, where no person is imprisoned in the House of Correction. Its neat, whitewashed cells are empty, thank God. The plates and cups and saucers in its pantry are never taken from the shelves. The useless bolts rust in their rusting staples. The master and mistress of the jail fill up life by taking summer boarders in the house assigned to them.

Now it is in the power of the Christian men and women to achieve a triumph akin to that in every county, when the religious and moral forces combine to their work of certain victory, — that is to say, when they so determine.

More than this, and better than this, I know, thank God, many households of Christian training, where little children grow up glad and happy, because they know they are God's children, — where they never feared a blow, — where they never shrunk under anger, — where life has been as beautiful and as glad to them as Heaven. I have seen such children come with their parents every morning to sing their hymn of thanks, as simply as the birds sing theirs. I have found them looking forward on life, as bravely and as certainly as the morning sun looks forward to his daily course of blessing. Now it is in the power of the Christian men and women of any place so to bring up their own households, so to show their neighbors what Religion is, — that "Love is the Whole," — as to achieve everywhere a victory as great as that, when they so determine.

And, not to go farther, I know, and you know, communities where the love of God and the love of Man have so far exerted themselves already, that, from "native impulse, elemental force," the best men drift into the places of command. It is of course that their governors are modest, honest, brave, and true. It is in the power of the Christian men and women of any community in New England to bring about a victory as great as that, when they so determine.

Talk of lack of enthusiasm! Say that the Church wants a visible object! Try this visible object, — the visible kingdom of a present God! When your young man wakes up to find that he also is a son of God, and

comes to your church, to ask where he is to stand, and what he is to do, make this answer first of all, —

"To begin with, we have to see that this village is as healthy as those happy hamlets on the Cordilleras;

"We mean to have it as lovely as the villages on Lake Como;

"We mean to have its morals and manners as pure as if it were the home of Oberlin;

"For children born apt for art, there shall be advantages as genuine, though they be not as large, as at Milan or Florence;

"For whatever other range of learning, our schools and libraries shall be such as Horace Mann and Robert Owen never dreamed of;

"For the search after truth, we mean that these people shall be as eager as the noble Jews of Berea;

"Life shall be simple here as if we lived in the islands of the blessed;

"And we believe there will come to us a happiness, because we do not seek it, — such as men sought for and did not find among the Lotus-eaters and in Sybaris."

Once offer a programme like that, for the duty of a staff-officer in bringing in the Reign of God, and your young women of life, and your young men of courage, will hear you gladly, — will enlist, and put their shoulders to the wheel

And these are only so many little illustrations of a beginning. I have not pretended to describe the Kingdom of God. I have only tried to name some of the first steps to be taken in the preparation. To make that preparation is the duty of the Church. As the kingdom comes, it will describe itself. For us to make the highway ready, that He may reign whose right it is to reign!

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 Beacon Street, Boston

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

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[No. 36]

A STORY OF THE PRAIRIES

BY

REV. ROBERT COLLYER

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
BOSTON

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and wpward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christanity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

A STORY OF THE PRAIRIES.

When I went to see "Jasper" once, and help dedicate a little church he had built, with his own means in part, I heard a very touching story I would love to tell, if I were able, just as it was told to me: —

We had to ride ten miles to the meeting-house; and, about half-way on our journey, came to a farm-house on the prairie which will always stay with me now as more than a mere dwelling, as a battle-field is more than a field; especially if, like some such places, it is the ground where a battle was fought between good and evil, and victory crowned the good.

That farm, my friend said, belongs to an old settler who has lived without God in the world, so far as a man can live without him who pays his way and works his stint. A good many years ago, he lost his first wife, by whom he had three sons; since then, he married again, and had more children; but has always declared he did not believe in God, or Christ, or a revelation, or religion, or churches, or the life to come. It was not merely a *doubt* about these matters he would express whenever he got a chance, but a round and complete *denial*, on which he rested as a distinction to be proud of. He raised his sons in his own way; his unbelief was their catechism and creed. They were seldom seen in a church or Sunday school; and, as they grew up to manhood, they spent their Sundays hunting and rambling around the country, to the sore annoyance, now and then, of little knots of worshippers disturbed by their racket.

One Sunday my friend went to preach at a woods meeting close to a small church he had opened in the skirts of the wilderness; and, as he was about to close his sermon, was startled to see one of these young men pushing his way through the crowd to the platform. "I can see him as I talk to you," Jasper said, — "tall, about twenty-eight; not the stalwart fellow I used to know, but a bent and broken man, with great eyes full of a strange light, and with a firm mouth; and, as he came up the steps, I saw in his face a tender yet intense purpose, which seemed almost awful in such a man. He was dressed in his week-day clothes, and was without a coat; and I remember the look of wonder all about me; for the people knew no more what to make of it than I did."

The preacher went on with his sermon, while the young man took a seat behind; and, as soon as he had breath to speak, leaned forward, touched him, and said: "Jasper, will you tell the folks I want to speak to them this afternoon? I have something to say to them, as an outsider, which I hope may do some good."

My friend was startled, of course. He had no idea what the sick man wanted to say. It was not unfair to infer, from what he had known of him, that he might want to tell the folks that this talk about God and religion was all nonsense. But Jasper never was the man to back out of a fight for the eternal verities; and then he must have been touched by that tender shining in the young man's face; and so, the moment he was through, he said, "John wants to speak to us this afternoon, he says, *as an outsider;* and I propose we hear him."

As they sat at dinner under the trees, there was only one thing they could talk about, and this was, "What can Johnny have to say to us?" They knew he had but little education, and was about the last man in the county to address a public meeting of any kind; and, as

Jasper sat eating his dinner and hearing what was said, his heart sank a little; for he feared he had made a mistake in giving up his second service.

When the meeting gathered, the friends, whose hearts were softened for the sick man, agreed he should have the chapel, as he was clearly too weak to speak in the open air. They felt that, whether he wanted to speak for or against them, he must be treated with all courtesy. It was clear also he could not stand to talk long, so they set a chair on the platform for him. The people flocked in, filled every foot of standing-room, and crowded about the windows outside. Then John began to speak. Jasper wrote out the address next morning as near as he could recall it, and I copy now from his notes: —

"Friends, I ain't a member of no church, and never was; so I want to speak to you as an *outsider*. I never had no religious training, nor much schoolin', and I grew up a wild boy. I used to 'tend Sunday school once in a while; but I never belonged to no class; I set on one side and got all the fun I could; and that was what I went for. Then, when I grew older, I began to horse-race, and drink, and gamble; and instead of going to meetin' Sundays, I hunted foxes, and shot squirrels and deer. I reckon you have heerd us hunting foxes through these woods, while you were holding meetin' right here; and that was the way I come up. You may some of you thought I was happy. I wasn't: I was troubled all the time; and now, when I think of it, I feel sick of the way I spent my youth. My health is gone; my body is a skeleton. I want you to see how thin I be: look at that arm! And I hardly have breath to talk; but I felt I must come here to-day and tell you my story.

"Over a year ago I made up my mind to quit gambling, and drinking, and hard swearing, anyhow; but it was awful hard work. Then I thought I would join church, and see if that was any help; but I thought my brother had wronged me about some property, and I hated him like fury; so you see I could not join a church while I felt that way, and I had to give up the idea. I got to hate that brother, so I made up my mind to kill

him, and went and borrowed a gun to shoot him; but I couldn't do it. Somehow I guess my conscience went agin me, — seems as if that was the way; but I had an awful time of it, — weeks and months miserable as a man could be.

"O you parents," he cried then, with anguish in his tones, "I want to say a word now to you. You hev children; you must love them. Will you let me beg you to show your love by raising them different to what I was raised, and save them from all that misery?

"One Sunday, when I was feeling that way, I come here to meetin' to hear Jasper preach; and it seemed like the sermon was aimed right at me; I was hit sure. So I went home and got my mother's old Bible out, and went to reading and studying of it, 'most night and day, and feeling worse'n ever. Every thing was so dark and bad. I didn't know where to turn. One night last week, I was lying on my bed, — all over suffering and pain; and all of a sudden that black cloud cleared! The load was lifted off my heart, and there seemed to be a great light in which every thing come out plain. I wanted to get up and hunt my brother, and tell him we must forgive each other right there. But I did not like to wake him. Then, the first time for a long while, I fell asleep sweet and still as you ever saw. I did not feel much sick any more, — slept right on to morning. Then I got up and dressed, went to find my brother, and we fixed things right away. Seems as if he was just as pleased as I was to make up and shake hands.

"So I have come here to join this meetin', if you will take me in after I tell you just the way I believe. Some will laugh at me, I know, for joining meetin'; and some won't like it. I can't help that, and it is not my lookout. I don't know much; but I notice those who are trying real hard to live better lives in this section join a meetin'. Some of you will say, as I used to say, 'Church-members ain't no better than outsiders.' Well, I know joining church don't make a man no better, when he don't try real hard to lead a better life. Some church-members is the meanest folks I ever knew; but then some is the best folks I ever knew. There is folks in meetin' whose ways I don't like, and there is folks out of meetin' whose ways I don't like. So I think the reasons is as good for going in as

staying out, anyhow. But I do find that my best friends — them that have been truest to me every time — are members of meetin' or believe in it. So I know what I want to do.

"Now I want to tell you what I believe. There's the Bible. Some of you know how we used to say, 'The Bible is nothin' but the works of men like us.' I have fixed that up in my own mind this way: If the Bible is the works of men, it's a first-rate book any way. I have been reading it, pretty much night and day, for a good spell, now; and the more I read the better it grows. I don't know no man, nor no set of men, that I think could begin to make as good a book now. And I don't see how men ever could make such a book, the way it comes to me, without some higher Power somewheres to help them. But, if men like we are did make it, I am willing to be guided by as good as they were, until I can do better myself.

"Then there's heaven. I think there's two heavens and two hells: one here and one hereafter, both kinds; and I have been in both down here, but mostly in hell. I never expect to find a worse hell yonder than I lived in here before God took me to heaven last week.

"And some of you folks say there's no falling from grace. I cannot think so. I got a mite of it by two years' hard work, and felt I was a little ways toward heaven; but when I got hating my brother so, I lost what little I had made and went right down into hell, worse'n ever. But, while I talk to you, I am in heaven. I am full of pain and just on the edge of my grave; but there's no comparison the way I feel now and the way I used to feel, when you used to see me healthy and strong, with every thing my own way, a thrashing round.

"So I have come here to join church. You will think I mean Jasper's church, but I don't. If Jasper had a church and he should die, the church would die, because the body ain't nothin' without a head. I want to join this branch of Jesus Christ's church, where Jasper is the minister. Jesus Christ said, 'I am the vine and ye are the branches;' and I want to be grafted into this branch, if you will take me."

He tried to go on and tell them about his faith in the life to come; and how it had come to him at last of its

own accord clear and sure as sunshine; but he was now so exhausted, that, though the people were all wrapped in a wonder, and strong men to whom tears were strange were weeping like children, there was such a power and pathos in his tones, and such a light on his face, as he spoke to them, yet they saw he was fainting. Two thoughtful men had sprung up some time before to hold him in his chair, as he battled for strength to say his last words; so they all begged him now to stop, for he had fully told his story. Then Jasper said to him, when his strength had come back a little, "Brother, will you make this Bible, by the best light which comes to you, the rule of your faith and practice? and will you make a sincere desire to follow Christ your only test of Christian fellowship?" He whispered, "I will." "Then," said Jasper again, "I want you, Christian men and women of every name, who have heard John's confession, and are willing to admit him to the church of the living God, to stand on your feet." There were Methodists there, and Baptists, and others of other names; but they were so lifted out of their abiding-places, as God stole the dogmas out of their hearts by that baptism of fire and tears, that they all stood up as one man. The doors swung wide open, and there was plenty of room for the humble, pleading, free, Christian thinker, who on the far edge of life would only spell the truth out painfully for himself by that light which is not of the sun: and then they all went home.

There is little more to tell. My friend went to see him next day, and all he could say about it was, "Jasper, something higher than myself sent me to the grove yesterday, and told me what to say. It was the last chance; I can never speak again. If I get strong enough, I should like to go and be baptized; but if that cannot be, it makes little matter, because the other baptism was the great thing, you know, after all. I *should* like to live,

to make some little amends for my life; but I have to leave all that with God now. He must do what seems best. I feel I am near my end."

And indeed this was the end. He rapidly grew weaker after that. The good folks all about flocked to see him; and they tell still of the bright, quiet atmosphere which was about him as a breath of heaven, strangely changing the poor little farm-house, that had been so desolate and so shut out from the better life since the mother left her children to the tender mercies of a home without God. He was simple, restful, and sunny-hearted all day long, for he was in that land of Beulah which Bunyan saw, where the pilgrims rest for a space in the sunshine before they go into the river. Only once he showed a touch of temper. A preacher came to see him, and insisted on talking in a mournful way about the future. He could not bear that; I think he must have felt it was an insult to the mighty love of God that had plucked him as a brand from the burning, or as if one should come and talk to one of our children mournfully about their home. But the heavens did not hide the earth as yet. He thought of every thing a man ought to see to, and put his house in order; and then, on the day which was to know no night, he whispered, "Jasper, it is all right, — all clear ahead. I feel sure I shall soon see my mother now." And I think the mother was saying that very instant, "Now I shall soon see my boy." On a gusty November day, as the first snow was falling, they laid what was left away in the lonely little cemetery, and the snow came down and covered the grave with a robe as white as that John wears,

> "Where angels gather immortality
> From life's fair tree, fast by the throne of God."

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25 Beacon Street, Boston

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FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

[No. 37]

THE RISING STAR

OF

THE LIBERAL FAITH.

BY

REV. WILLIAM P. TILDEN.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

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THE RISING STAR OF THE LIBERAL FAITH.

"ANOTHER GOSPEL, WHICH IS NOT ANOTHER." — GAL. I. 6, 7.

So Paul designates some heresy which had crept into the churches in Galatia. Exactly what the heresy was it may not be easy to tell; and for our present purpose it is quite unimportant to know, for the heresy of one age often proves the orthodoxy of the next. Christianity itself was the great heresy of the age in which it appeared and Paul himself was the arch-heretic of his time, freely acknowledging that after the way which *men called heresy* he did worship the God of his fathers; but what men called heresy was to him the very truth of God, and while that truth fed and nourished his immortal nature, he cared little what it was called. That was a grand and noble position. It recognized truth as the essential thing to be sought, won, and followed, whatever *name* it may bear. It was heroic. It showed true faith, true confidence in the new word which God had spoken to his soul.

But when he says of another heretic (as, in turning to the context, you will see that he does), "Let him be *accursed*," giving the anathema, whatever be its meaning, double force by a solemn repetition, we cannot but think he took a most unfortunate method of winning the offender, whatever the nature of his heresy, from the error of his belief, and set a disastrous example to the Christian church, — an example that has had a sad amount of following ever since.

First the mother church tried this method; enforced, with steel and flame, on those whose only crime was that they loved that church so well, they would remove all stains from her garments.

Then the reformers — themselves under the curse of heresy — tried it on those they deemed heretics, whose only crime was that they thought these reformers needed reforming, since in their teaching they had widely departed from the simplicity of Christ. And so the heresy-hunting spirit came across the water, even with those who came for "freedom to worship God," and, with hangings and banishments, wrote one of the saddest chapters in the history of persecutions on our own shore.

But we live in a brighter day. Thanks to the heroic fathers who suffered and died for freedom to think and speak their own honest thought, the remnant of persecution for opinion's sake which still lingers here and there is hardly worth naming. It is fast vanishing, as the night mist hanging over boggy marshes, when touched by the rising sun. If we have followed Paul in denouncing, we are beginning to follow him in blessing; for we must not forget that the same Paul who, in the ardor of his impulsive enthusiasm, invoked a curse on the heretics that troubled him, also wrote to another church in a higher mood: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity vaunteth not itself, is not easily provoked, beareth all things, hopeth all things, believeth all things, *endureth* all things;" significantly adding: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things."

If, then, we are to quote Paul as authority, which, if he could speak to us from the bright heavens to-day, I fully believe he would not have us do, — yet, if we are to quote him as authority, let us quote him at his best, in his golden words of charity, which will live forever, and

not in his curses on heretics, which happily the world is fast outgrowing.

Paul's own rising out of *childish* denunciation into *manly* charity is just the rising we are beginning to witness in all the more prominent and leading realms of Christian thought. It is but a return, after long wandering in the wilderness, to that word and spirit of Jesus when he said to James and John, who would have called down fire from heaven to consume their opponents, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save."

From this standpoint, with the light of Christ's spirit and of Paul's chapter on charity falling on the text, we may see in it a broader and deeper meaning than was originally intended. "Another gospel, which is not another." What Paul meant when he wrote this doubtless was, that the "other gospel" was no gospel. It was unworthy of the name. This may have been so. We will not undertake to decide that question. But honest history clearly tells that what has often been stigmatized as "another gospel" has proved, in the course of events, *not another*, but the same old gospel of redeeming love in another form. "Another gospel," if you will, as differing widely from the old statements once deemed essential; and yet not another, if it rests on the same divine base recognized by Jesus himself, the love of God and the love of man. Indeed, the gospel preached to-day in many churches still reckoned as soundly orthodox, *is* "another gospel," judged by the standards of a former generation; and yet "not another," but only another presentation of that old gospel which is continually revealing new features under new light. Indeed, so obsolete have some of the old leading and prominent doctrines become, that, if you ask a person now what is his opinion about the *five points*, for example, he will understand you to inquire

concerning a certain location, not very reputable, in New York, where a mission has been established to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, instruct the ignorant, reclaim the vicious. He will not be likely, unless very thoroughly instructed in the old-school theology, to think of your referring to the *five points* of Calvinism. Truly "another gospel" is preached in our day, not alone by those called "liberal," but also by many who have never broken outwardly from the old faith, but who are constantly breaking in the new thought of the age, letting it silently modify the old beliefs. Indeed, the infrequency with which these *five points*, once deemed so vital, are presented nowadays, shows how they have gradually dropped out of the religious thought of the age. Probably there is not one in twenty who can recall them. Here they are, in their old order: —

1. Predestination.
2. Particular redemption.
3. Total depravity.
4. Irresistible grace.
5. The certain perseverance of the saints.

How antiquated they sound! But the most vigorous theological thought once found its expression in these five points. Antiquated as they seem to us now, they were once all alive with the freshest and most living thought of the times. Just see in what a masterly way they are arranged; with what links of logic they are united; how each involves the other, all through! The third, or central, point is "total depravity." If that be true, man cannot save himself. And who can save him but God? And if God by sovereign grace sees fit to save whom he will, what is that but "predestination"? And if one be predestined to eternal life, must he not be "particularly redeemed;" and does not "particular redemption" neces-

sitate "*irresistible* grace"? For, if grace could be resisted, the whole scheme of redemption might fail. But, being irresistible, the "certain perseverance of the saints" must follow. There you have it, knit together in the meshes of logic as adroitly as its most enthusiastic advocates could wish. Cut either one of these five hard knots, and all the rest untie of themselves; for the net is knit with one string.

I remember getting into this net myself in early life, and just how I ever got out I never could tell. I don't think I reasoned myself out. I think it was a sort of reflex wave, at the change of the tide, that bagged the net the other way, and so set me free. Multitudes have been set free in the same way, — by the changes in the theologic tides rather than by any deliberate untying of these hard-drawn logical and theological knots.

But while the omission of either one of these old "five points" was not very long ago regarded as fatal heresy, — "another gospel," — it is wonderful how rapidly they are passing away, even in the churches which once held to them as a sheet-anchor, while the precious old gospel, with its ever-new disclosures of redeeming love, still remains, to quicken, comfort, and bless.

And so it is that the star of theology, which shines brightly in one age, every one of its five points being tipped with luminous interest, sets, in time, and another star rises, whose luminous points shine with other and higher truths, or what at all events seem higher to those who look up to the rising star with faith and hope.

What the five points of the rising star now are no one can tell for another, since each one is not only permitted, but invited, to look with his own eyes through such telescope as he may deem the best; and so all who rejoice in the light of the same star would not be likely to give the same name to its prominent points. Those in the

scientific drift of thought would naturally have one class of truths suggested; those in the currents of historic criticism, another; and those thinking more of the changes in common every-day religious thought, yet another.

It is only of these last, open to the observation of all, that I would now speak. Here there are certain points of light which are coming to be seen with such distinctness by different sects and schools that it will not be deemed presuming to name some of them. If I may be permitted to do so, selecting no extreme views of either wing of thought, but naming only five points which, like the old, are linked together, each growing out of the other, and all of which are shining more and more clearly from the bright heavens into the open hearts of men, I think I should name first

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

This is, of course, an old truth to those born and bred in the liberal faith; and those born and bred in the old faith have thought they believed it. But its real glory has been obscured by other views of the Divine Being, and it is only in these latter days that the blessed truth has been seen as a central *truth* of the *Gospel*, changing coloring, reconstructing our whole method of religious thought. While the old star was shining, with its vertical point tipped with the lurid flame of "predestination," the prevailing thought of God, necessarily, was of his Divine sovereignty, as King of kings, issuing his decrees, passing sentence; an Almighty Judge on the throne of the universe, the great predestinating power. The fatherly attributes, though not denied, were hidden. So God was *feared* much more than loved. But another star has risen, whose vertical point is illuminated with the Fatherhood of God. Under its light dark shadows have been lifted, and brighter thoughts of God and man, and life

and death, and things present and things to come, have broken in upon the souls of men, making the whole earth shine with His glory. And as men and women have read their Testaments anew under this light, they have been surprised to find that this was a *central* thought in the teaching of Jesus, — that God was indeed a father, and his name Love.

Now, put this first point in the *rising*, beside the first point in the *setting* star. Put beside the word "Predestination" the word "Father." How the whole theologic atmosphere changes! How the winter gives place to spring! How the ice melts, and the buds swell, and the birds begin to sing! "Predestination" tells only of *power* and *will;* "Father" tells of *love* and *tender care,* "Predestination" is cold and forbidding; "Father" is warm and inviting. "Predestination" says, "Stand and receive your sentence;" "Father" says, "Come to my arms, my child." Whatever of truth there ever was in the doctrine of predestination remains; but under the light of the Divine Fatherhood it is the predestination of love and wisdom, the predestination of a Divine Father seeking the highest good of his children. I believe that none of us as yet have fully grasped this great and precious truth. But its light is shining more and more all round the horizon, and we may confidently name it as the vertical point of the rising star.

As a second point I would name

THE SONSHIP OF MAN.

Perhaps you expected me to say the brotherhood of man. This is indeed a great truth, breaking on the world more and more clearly, as all the philanthropic movements of our day abundantly testify; but this marks the relation of *man* to *man*, — a human relation. The higher truth out of which this flows is the relation of man to

God, — a divine relationship, indicating man's origin and destiny. Out of the Fatherhood of God comes the sublime and inspiring truth of the *divine sonship of humanity.* The first cannot be true unless the second is true also. The word "Father" must be emptied of all its meaning if it does not assure us we are his children. Every time we say "our Father" we imply, whether we think of it or not, our own divine relationship to him, — our sonship. *Jesus* has always been *recognized*, in his church, as "Son of God." But, as the second person of a holy and mysterious Trinity, he has been taken up so high that humanity has lost sight of its brotherly relation to him. The truth beginning to break forth now is, that in the divine humanity of Jesus we see the divine humanity of the race, — in his divine Sonship we see the type and assurance of the divine sonship of man. The greatness and glory of this truth we but faintly appreciate as yet. Under its light we learn to respect our own natures, — to feel that we were made for something high, and pure, and holy. We learn to trust our Father, to feel that we are not the poor waifs of chance, with none to love us or care for us, but the sons and daughters of the ever-living and ever-loving Father, — unworthy, wayward, sinning often, but still his children, watched and cared for by a love that is divine in its strength, its wisdom, and its tenderness. Put this beside the second point of the receding star. Against "particular redemption" write "sonship." Which is the grander, the more ennobling truth? "Particular redemption" suggests partiality, favoritism. Some are chosen and some rejected, not because of character, but according to divine predestination. "Sonship" tells of a filial relation to God, — the filial relation, not of a part, but of all. The *true earthly* Father shows no favoritism. Some of the children may be more loving and more lovable than others, but the true father

loves them all; and the farthest wanderer among them all is welcomed home with open arms whenever he comes to himself, sees and forsakes his sins, and turns his steps homeward. It was when the prodigal, sick of his sin, came to see how he had abused his sonship, that he renounced forever his evil way, and in the strength God always gives to a noble purpose said, "I will arise and go to my father."

This opens a third point of the rising star, namely,

SIN ITS OWN SORROW.

The father of the wandering prodigal did not follow his wayward child in wrath, but in love. He did not punish him for his sins. His sins brought their own sorrow, inflicted their own punishment. This is coming to be more and more clearly understood, — that it is not God that punishes, but sin. It is sin that pierces; it is sin that blights; it is sin that withers and cripples and destroys the man. It is sin, therefore, that is to be feared, and nothing but sin. God is not to be feared, save with that reverential, filial fear that is born of love, and fears lest the father's love should not be returned with the love of the child. And that is fear of one's self rather than fear of God. God is to be *loved* first, last, and always. He has linked sorrow with sin in mercy, not in wrath, to show us the nature of wrongdoing and help us to forsake it. When the suffering of sin brings a man to himself, as it did the prodigal, then he sees that the suffering was merciful, and blesses God that at last his eyes were opened and his feet turned homeward.

Against "total depravity" write "sin its own sorrow." The first is coming to be boldly renounced and denounced even in the house of its friends, or those who were its advocates, while the second is seen to be true to the facts

and experience of human nature. The first is untrue to man and dishonorable to God. The second is verified in human experience, and shows that the consequences of sin, fearful as they are, are not only consistent with the love of God, but are a signal proof of that love.

And, as sin is its own sorrow, so goodness is its own reward. This I would name as the fourth point,

GOODNESS ITS OWN REWARD.

It is the counterpoint of the other. The two belong together, like the fatherhood of God and the sonship of man. The promises to well-doing in the Scriptures are as rich as its warnings against ill-doing are solemn; and just as God has linked sorrow with sin, to show its nature, so he has linked peace and satisfaction with goodness and right, to show their nature. One is from beneath, and carries with it the unquenchable fire; the other is from above, and carries with it the peace of a heart at one with God. So hell and heaven are not myths, but realities. They belong to the soul. We slide into the one by sinning, we rise into the other by living truly and nobly. And as there are no consequences of sin so fearful as sin itself, so there are no rewards of goodness so rich as goodness itself. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness," said Jesus, "for they shall be filled,"—that is, filled with what they hunger for, *righteousness.* It is its own highest reward. No compensation of righteousness can compare with righteousness itself. It is its own divinest compensation.

In place, then, of "irresistible grace," which meant that those predestined to eternal life could not resist God's grace though all the rest might and would, — in place of such narrow and limited "irresistible grace" put "goodness its own reward." How the vista opens under this light! "Goodness its own reward!" It lifts us right up

above all arbitrary decrees and external rewards and punishments into a region where we get a sight of the real nature of the *soul* itself; where we can see why sin debases and goodness elevates it; why sin *is* darkness and goodness *is* light; and how it is that to grow in moral and spiritual excellence, to increase in heavenly graces, affections, and loves, to improve both the *quality* and the *quantity* of one's being, is the divine method of making the most of this life and of that which is beyond.

And this brings us to the fifth and last point of the rising star, namely,

THE FUTURE LIFE THE NATURAL OUTGROWTH OF THIS.

Immortality has never been a matter of serious doubt in the Christian church; but it has often been held in a way to break the natural connection between the present and the future life. This brief earth-life has been regarded as the only period in the soul's existence that could be reached by the pardoning grace of God. *Here*, men might repent and be forgiven, it was said; *there*, there was no forgiveness. *Here*, all is changing; *there*, all irrevocably fixed. *Here*, man might choose whom he would serve; *there*, the power of choice was forever taken away. So death, though not the end of existence, was virtually the end of *human* life; for that life could hardly be called human which was utterly divested of moral freedom.

In this future existence there were two everlastingly distinct conditions: one called Hell, where those who died in a wrong faith, or without a certain religious experience, would be punished for ever and ever; the other called Heaven, where those of the true faith and experience would be rewarded with joy for ever and ever. This naturally and inevitably threw around the grave

the pall of a dreadful uncertainty, and death came to be regarded as "the king of terrors."

But under the light of the Fatherhood of God and the Divine sonship of humanity, slowly but surely a great change has taken place in the common thought of the future life. Such a tremendous break in the continuity of being — a break in which humanity lost all that made it distinctively human, leaving only a capacity to enjoy or suffer forever — was seen to be unnatural, unphilosophical, and, above all, irreligious, in the light of that truth, so clearly shown in Christ, that God is a Father.

Under the old idea, the future existence was so separated from this, so different in kind and quality of being, that those fully believing in it seriously doubted whether friends would know each other hereafter, and whether all the loves and tender affections of this life do not end with the grave. These doubts still linger in many minds. They are the dead leaves of the old theology still cumbering the ground. For, just as soon as we recognize the future life as the outgrowth and continuation of this, light shines in upon the darkness. Death is seen to be, not a *catastrophe*, breaking the soul's life in twain and destroying its distinctively human elements, but a transition from life here to life there, — a transition ordered by Divine Love just as truly as birth, and so good in and of itself; a door of exit from the material into the spiritual realm of being, — a door through which we pass, just as we are, carrying with us everything but the body of flesh, to enter upon such service and such enjoyment as we have become capable of by right living here, or, on the other hand, upon such discipline as we may need to purify from sin, and wake the love of God and goodness in the soul. For I think it is one of the truths more and more clearly seen in all schools of religious thought, that until that love is waked in the soul, — the love of real goodness, —

no change of form or place can bring the heavenly peace and joy.

Regarding the future life as an outgrowth of this, we can see more clearly the meaning of this life. We are here for growth, for discipline, for schooling; to learn the difference between good and evil, right and wrong; to rise out of the animal into the moral and spiritual life, and to help our fellows in rising. The loves that bind us to one another in families and communities are sacred loves, budding here, only to blossom and bear richer fruit beyond,

> "In those everlasting gardens
> Where angels walk and seraphs are the wardens,"

and "where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels," — flowering into a love, broader, deeper, and more divine, of which our sweet home relations are but the bud and promise.

With this view of the risen life, there is not a duty here, not a pleasure, not a pain, not an experience, especially there is not a good deed done, a kind word spoken, a helping hand rendered, any single act done to aid our fellows and bless the world, that does not tell directly upon the character, and so upon the condition of the life beyond.

These, then, we venture to name as five points in the rising star: —

1. The Fatherhood of God.
2. The Divine sonship of man.
3. Sin its own sorrow.
4. Goodness its own reward.
5. The future life the natural outgrowth of this.

I limit myself to five, simply to parallel the old five points with five of more modern thought, letting these suggest, as they must, a multitude of changes in other directions, equally marked.

It is plain this star is rising. The points I have named are no longer held by the liberal churches, so-called, alone. Liberal thought and liberal churches are so common now in all denominations that we can no longer appropriate the name. Bearing it, as we did, cheerfully, while it was a reproach, we are only too glad, now it is an honor, to share it with the increasing number who are rising, or have risen, into the sweet fellowship of its broad and hopeful spirit. But, standing with all such on the table-land of what seems to us the best thought of our time, we would joyfully face the light and go forward. And so, with the Divine Fatherhood drawing, the Divine sonship inspiring; with sin its own sorrow to warn, and goodness its own reward to win; with the future life as sequel and sequence of this to link both worlds together and show how life here and life there are *one* life, we will keep mind and heart forever open to all the fresh revelations of divine love, fully believing that if we are faithful to our highest light, God will see to it that the light shall grow brighter and brighter to the perfect day.

[No. 38]

JUDGMENT DAYS

BY

REV. RUSH R. SHIPPEN

BOSTON
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION
25 BEACON STREET

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and wpward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

Our Declaration.

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christanity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

JUDGMENT-DAYS.

By Rush R. Shippen.

The theological idea of a single judgment-day for all the generations of mankind makes the event so distant and unreal that it is losing its hold on popular belief.

Is there then no judgment-day? Yes; many. Not once only, after death; but here, and hereafter, judgment-days surely come to every soul.

Experience and Scripture alike declare the law of retribution and the fact of judgment. We reap what we sow. Thorns never produce grapes, nor thistles figs. The harvests for ever answer to the kind of seed planted. The reward is to every man according as his work shall be. A book of remembrance is written. A cloud of witnesses surrounds us. Our sins find us out. By spiritual gravitation, every soul, as surely as did Judas, goes to his own place. The lines of divine justice run through earth and eternity, separating the false from the true, the evil from the good, for ever pronouncing doom to the wicked, and to the faithful, "Well done." By a variety of imagery, — wise virgins and foolish, wheat and tares, sheep and goats, — the Scriptures vividly portray this grand spiritual process for ever going on in the divine government of the universe, of weighing and measuring and separating souls, and meting out their just deserts. They borrow the visible forms of our august processes of justice, — the court, the bench, the judge, the witnesses; and, in dramatic He-

brew style, these universal laws are concentrated into the idea of a judgment-day and a judgment-seat; declaring the solemn fact that every work and every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil, God shall bring into judgment; and erecting for us the Christian standard of justice, by declaring that we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

For retribution may for a time be hidden, or its results apparently delayed and slow to culminate. The seeds of sin or virtue require many days to ripen and show their fruit. Soon or late, however, the autumn surely tells the quality of the spring-time planting. Crises come, that test the life principle, that disclose the record and reveal the secrets, balance accounts to our honor or our shame, and mete out the righteous penalty or reward. These are the soul's judgment-days.

The popular belief in a judgment-day, as if there were but one, and that one beyond the grave, lessens the Scripture meaning. It perverts and dwindles into a single literal event far away and unreal this Oriental imagery of the august justice dealing with us to-day and for ever. It loses sight of that living law by which sin poisons and burns up the spiritual nature, while virtue gravitates heavenward; by which all wrong is condemned, whether in Buddhist Hindostan, or Orthodox America, and all piety, whether of Pagan or Christian, of Socrates or Calvin, wins the divine approval.

It portrays God on the throne as a vindictive despot, his wrath placated by the blood of innocent victims, even by the foul murder of his best-beloved Son; and Christ himself judging souls by arbitrary, technical tests that do not touch character or destiny. Punctilious

ritualism, a creed shibboleth, or the momentary enthusiasm of a death-bed conversion is accepted as the substitute for a well-spent life. The pious heathen or saintly heretic is rejected; while many a stained character is elected into bliss. Not by personal purity, but by Christ's payment of our penalty, this unnatural judgment-hall gives passport to glory.

Andrea Orcagna, in the Campo Santo at Pisa, and Michael Angelo, in the Sistine Chapel at Rome, paint the grim doctrine into fierce pictures of lost souls hopelessly writhing in the terrible torture of the burning gulf, and of Christ as judge, with uplifted, menacing hand thrusting back the miserable mortals who approach, suppliants for mercy, — an attitude utterly repugnant to Christ's character or God's good Spirit, — a libel on the gospel and on the Father of all souls. Thus the divine judgment is caricatured, and becomes a far-away, unnatural doctrine, whose force is lost in its unreality. So that men, who shrink from fire because it burns, or from arsenic because it poisons, recklessly brave that invisible justice which, soon or late, just as surely and relentlessly as fire and poison, brings every soul to judgment.

Away then with the crude theological fiction of a single, far off, visible judgment-day, that spoils the Scripture significance and blinds men to the eternal law! and see the solemn fact that the Bible declares. In every man's career come occasions that are turning-points of destiny. The past life is summed up: the accounts are balanced: the man is freshly weighed and measured: his secret life revealed: his real worth published: and he is doomed with the disgrace or crowned with the honor prepared by the thoughts and words and deeds of by-gone years. These important crises!

What are they? From the Greek *criteo*, to judge. the very root of the word tells us that a *crisis* is a judgment-day.

These crises come in this world. Great events, new duties, fresh trials, severe temptations, enlarging opportunities test our moral manhood, gauge and publish our spiritual strength or weakness, our fidelity to conscience, our faith in God and immortality, our loyalty or our treason. In Scripture figures: The door of opportunity opens. The wise, with lamps trimmed and burning, pass in; while the silly triflers lose their chance, and find *that* door shut for evermore. The wheat and tares grow together; the autumn reveals the difference. The great threshing-floor of time and events is for ever winnowing the chaff from the grain. Before the divine law, no wrong goes unavenged, no virtue unrewarded. It needs no vindictive decree, no visible barrier, no formal process to separate sheep from goats, the false from the true. By their different tastes, aims, and pursuits, by their course of life, habits of thought, and quality of character and inner spirit, they separate themselves. Dwelling in the same town, in the same church, in the same house, in their deeper life they are as unlike as white and black; they are as far apart as the zenith and the nadir. The workers of iniquity alienate themselves from truth and right, from God and the fellowship of good men; and place between themselves and happiness a deep, dark gulf, which in all eternity can be crossed only by repentance, pardon, and reform. No cruel decree but the law of the universe is for ever saying to workers of iniquity, "Depart ye!" While the very constitution of things, the voices of destiny, all the forces of the spiritual world are for ever inviting the good man, "Come, ye

blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!"

The real truth and teaching of the Bible thus unfold the religion of common sense and practical experience. Our theologies and religious forms and methods are tried by the searching test; — Do they make men better here and now? Do they save us from the sin that will first or last find us out and send every soul up or down to his own place? from the sin that is to be dreaded like flame and arsenic because to the soul it is fire and poison? Our judgment-days do not wait for death and another world. They come to nations. Jerusalem found hers in the terrible destruction wrought by Titus and described by Josephus, that so fearfully fulfilled the sad forebodings of Jesus. Despotism and slavery found theirs in the French Revolution and the American Rebellion. And, whether in some convulsive exposure of crime, or in the quiet and unseen harvesting of destiny, we are all even now standing at the judgment-bar of the living God.

When disrobed of mortality and this world's fortune, accident and circumstance left behind, and the soul must pass for what it nakedly is, what a searching ordeal shall be that new day that sums up the deeds done in the body, takes us as in our innermost selves we really are, and sends Dives and Lazarus alike each to his own true place. And along the eternal pilgrimage must come many another judgment-day, till the lash of retribution shall turn the sinner from his iniquity, while the smile of the divine favor for ever beckons the good man as he passes up and on from grace to glory, "Come up higher!"

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FORM OF BEQUEST.

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[No. 39]

POPULAR OBJECTIONS

TO

UNITARIANISM

CONSIDERED.

BY

REV. WILLIAM L. CHAFFIN.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

Our Faith.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.

Typical Covenant of a Unitarian Church.

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(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

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POPULAR OBJECTIONS TO UNITARIANISM CONSIDERED.

1. One objection sometimes urged against our faith is that Unitarianism is one of the new isms of modern times, an innovation on the time-honored Christian doctrine and polity. Such an objection coming from a Catholic would sound plausible, but from a Protestant it argues ignorance. For are not all Protestant denominations comparatively modern, — the oldest of them dating from the Reformation? Modern Unitarianism was organized nearly three hundred and fifty years ago by two great men named Socinus, and from them was called Socinianism. It obtained strongest foothold in Poland and Transylvania, where it still flourishes, notwithstanding numerous persecutions. But in fact our fundamental doctrine of the absolute unity of God is as old as Abraham. Moses was a Unitarian when he wrote, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." At Christ's coming the Jews were all Unitarians, while it is historically certain that the doctrine of the Trinity was a gradual growth subsequent to the time of the apostles. At the Council of Nice, 325 years after Christ, the doctrine of the equality of the Son with the Father first became authoritative church dogma; and not until 381, fifteen hundred years ago, at the Council of Constantinople, was the doctrine of the Trinity matured and finished. For years before that time the Church was about evenly divided between the two parties; in other words, about half the Church was Arian or Unitarian,

and this shows our antiquity clearly enough; but at that time Trinitarianism obtained political control. The Emperor Theodosius declared he would permit no other faith, and Arianism was suppressed by fire and sword.

We claim that Unitarianism is "the faith once delivered to the saints," — that it is substantially the doctrine of Peter, of John, of Paul, and of Christ. In other words, we profess to be Christians, disciples of Jesus, and the Gospel is our profession of faith. We have no other creed, and would gladly drop the word Unitarian altogether, were it not necessary to distinguish us from other Christians.

2. One of the commonest charges made against us is that Unitarians do not believe in the Bible. If we do not, why do we read from it on Sunday in our churches? Why do we teach from it in our Sunday-schools? Why do we give it a place above all other books? But let us see just what it means to believe in the Bible. One man means by it the acceptance as literal truth of everything in the Bible, — *e. g.*, the account of Creation in six days, the story of the Garden of Eden, of a universal flood, and the story of Jonah, — and that it is all the perfect, literal word of God. Another man thinks that these stories, and much else in the Bible, may be figurative illustrations of religious truth, but that it is just as truly God's inspired word. A third person thinks it sufficiently orthodox to say that the Bible contains a supernatural revelation from God; and that though there may be some errors in it, yet that its writers were sufficiently inspired to guard them from any essential error. Still other persons look upon the Bible as a natural book or collection of books, composed by men writing as other men do, guided by their natural faculties, and not inspired in any miraculous sense. Yet all four classes may use the Bible for religious guidance and inspiration, and all of them

may fairly be called believers in the Bible. Unitarians belong to the two latter classes. Some of them believe that the Bible transmits to us a divine revelation by means of writers who were guarded against essential errors; and some take the Bible as written in a natural way, without miraculous guidance of any kind, but no less valuable as a religious instructor, and as containing the record of our Christian religion, especially the divine life and sayings of Jesus.

We are, therefore, believers in the Bible, not because we believe it free from error, for we know it is not; but because we accept it as our manual of religion. Those who say that we do not believe in it, simply mean that we do not believe in it as they do. We do not go to it with a preconceived theory derived from sectarian teaching. We try to learn from the book itself just what it is. And we do not find that it claims to be perfect, infallible, and free from all error. It stimulates our reason, but it does not dethrone nor override it. There are many unsolved enigmas about it. We do not know the authors of many of the books, nor the time in which all were written, nor the meaning of much that is in them; but we find enough that we do know, and much that helps us to live a better life. So long as we use it in that reverent and truth-loving way, we claim to believe in the Bible, even though our theory of its origin and character may differ from the theories of others.

3. The third charge commonly made is that Unitarians do not believe in Christ; and that charge hurts. It is like telling one that he does not love his mother. Of all historic persons, Jesus holds the central place in our minds and hearts. No one who has read Unitarian literature and is familiar with Unitarian utterances will risk his reputation for veracity by such a charge; and no one not thus familiar has the right to make such a charge. In

fact, we accept Jesus for what we think he was, and for what he claimed to be. We believe that no one else has given to men so pure, so true, so complete a morality as he, so spiritual, inspiring, and helpful a religion, so exalted a conception of God, our Heavenly Father, so glorious a philanthropy; that no one else taught with anything like his wisdom and power; that no other teacher has given us so noble an example, and so holy a character, and is therefore entitled to such human love, veneration, allegiance, and faith. Therefore we claim to be his disciples, and we try to deserve to be called after his name, — that is, Christians.

How can it be said in this cruel way then that we do not believe in Christ? Those who make this serious charge think they are telling the truth; and why is it that they are guilty of so grave a misrepresentation? It is from want of thoroughness and accuracy in thinking. What they really mean, without knowing it, is that we do not believe in Christ as they do, that we do not accept their idea of Christ; and then, forgetting that their idea of Christ is one thing, and Christ may possibly be very different, they assume that those who differ from them do not believe in Christ at all. Now we have just as good a reason to say to them, "You do not believe in Christ because you do not believe in him as we do," as they have for saying that we do not believe in him because we do not believe in him as they do. But we say no such thing. We gladly allow that all — Catholic, Methodist, Quaker, or any others — who accept Christ's truth, honor his character, and seek to follow his example, are believers in Christ. But it is said: "You do not believe that Christ is God; you do not believe that we are saved by his blood; and this is what we mean by believing in Christ." And our answer is: Granted: it is what you mean; but it is not what we mean, and we do not believe that it is what

the Gospels mean; for we find that the confession that won the greatest praise from Jesus was that of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." And Jesus answered and said, "Blessed art thou, Simon, Son of Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven."

"Thou art the Christ" — does he say God the Son? No, — "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." This is our confession; and so long as we say it with believing hearts no man can, except through ignorance or malice, say that we do not believe in Christ.

4. Another objection we have to meet is that Unitarians expect to be saved by their own merits, while the Bible says, "By grace ye are saved." Let us carefully examine this charge. What do we mean by "salvation"? It is to be saved from sin. As the Scripture says, "He came to save his people from their sins." We are saved from sin in proportion as we build up a good, strong, righteous character. And how do we do this? Do we ever claim that we can do this by our unaided efforts, with no help from God or man or any outside sources? By no means. Parental training, education, social influences, the Bible, books, the influence of nature and of the Holy Spirit, — all help us in his work. These are God's gifts; and so are the faculties, conscience, affection, intellect, and will by which we build up character, — all are God's gifts, or his grace. Our efforts are only one factor in the great work, so that, if saved at all, we never claim that we are saved by our own merits alone, for that would be absurd. It is as we build a house. No man builds a house out of his own brain. Past generations have worked out methods, discovered mechanical laws, furnished models; and God provides materials, clay and stone and wood. Thus, past experience has discovered spiritual laws, increased wisdom, furnished models of

character; God has given us society, human institutions, the Bible, nature's influence, life and faculty and strength. These all come by the gift or grace of God. And when we consider that we could not be saved without these, we also exclaim, "We are saved by grace." But not wholly by grace, for all these never saved a man who did not try to save himself; and does not the apostle, likewise, say, "Work out your own salvation"? You will see then that while our own effort is one factor, and a very essential factor, in working out the character (which is real salvation), many other things work with it, so that no sane person can ever have the conceit to claim that he is saved merely by his own merit.

If this charge means that we think our immortality is earned by us, — is to be regarded as wages paid for our life-service, — nothing could be more false. We know that every day is attended with blessings we neither earn nor deserve. We did not earn the beauty of earth and sky, parental love, home, and all life's pleasure and opportunity; much less do we claim to have earned immortal glory. These come to us by the grace of God, by the free bounty of our Heavenly Father.

And now I wish to state this opinion, — that it is we, and not our critics, who believe most in being "saved by grace." They are constantly saying that they are "saved solely by the merits of the Redeemer." If, then, they are saved by merits, how can it be claimed by them that they are saved by "free grace"? For grace that is obtained by the merits of another is not free; it is bought with a price, an equivalent is given for it; it is a purchase, and not a gift at all. That is what the song means, "Jesus paid it all, all the debt I owe." If Jesus paid it all, then where is the grace, the free gift?

5. It is also charged against our faith that it is a lax and easy doctrine, — what Joseph Cook calls a "limp and

lavender theology," tending to leave men careless, indifferent, worldly. It is said that the hope it holds out that God will never give up a soul to eternal despair, but that repentance is possible in another life, is an encouragement to continue in evil-doing.

I grant that there is ground for this last statement. The hope of final redemption doubtless does tend to encourage some in evil-doing whom the fear of endless woe might restrain. How then is the objection as against our faith met? I meet it in two ways: first, by showing that a similar but weightier objection lies against the opposing system; so that as between the two we must choose our own. This opposing system, as interpreted by Mr. Moody and most evangelical preachers, teaches that conversion blots out the penalty of a life of sin, that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, so that the convert, though made such in the last hour of a sinful life, goes to heaven; in short, that no matter what the life has been, he may be converted and go to heaven. Now the practical result of this teaching is that many persons, believing it, are content to live on in sin and gratify their evil desires, counting upon escaping the penalty by a late conversion. We all know this is so, and we know that such persons answer their anxious friends by saying, "Oh, I mean to be converted before I die." This doctrine is a palpable encouragement for continuance in evil-doing, and thousands of persons sin on, under the impression that they will repent in time to save themselves from perdition. I do not say that because this doctrine may be abused it is not true; but I do say that those who advocate it have no right to say that because our doctrine of eternal hope may be abused, therefore it is not true. One objection offsets the other.

Secondly, we endeavor to counteract any abuse of our doctrine of the future life, by teaching a strict doctrine

of retribution. Instead of asserting, as many of our critics do, that even a late conversion cancels the just penalty of sin, we affirm that no sin ever goes unpunished; that not more certainly does a wound scar the body than sin harms the soul; that every sin against purity, justice, goodness, lays up for the sinner pain, shame, and bitter penance, here and hereafter, and that it may take years and years in that great future to overcome the debasing and painful effects of a sinful life. Instead of this being a lax and easy doctrine, it seems to us, as compared with the popular doctrine just mentioned, to be terribly severe, but nevertheless to be what God has taught and we must therefore preach.

There is a sense, doubtless, in which ours is an easier doctrine, making us, I will not say less earnest, but less anxious about ourselves, our souls, and eternity. We plead guilty to the charge of having a religion that is easy to believe, that does not strain our faith or contradict our reason. We plead guilty to the charge of having a pleasant faith, that tends to make us cheerful and happy about our friends and about ourselves. It is pleasant to think that God is a loving Father, and will never be anything else in time or eternity.

And it is true that our theory of life allows us greater freedom of enjoyment, indulgence in a wider range of amusements. The games and pastimes that stricter sects forbid, we enjoy. We find nothing wicked in playing cards, in dancing during reasonable hours and with right company, and even in an occasional attendance upon the best theatrical plays. But we believe that these things are only the spice of life, not its food; that none of them should interfere with the real work of life; that as fast as possible we should find delight in greater things. We cannot see that they make us love God less; and we know that the permission to enjoy them makes us love our

religion better. If, because of all this, we are called worldly, I must remind the critic that the love, even the excessive love, of innocent pleasure is not the only form of worldliness. One of the worst forms of it seems to me to be a narrow, censorious spirit. Sectarianism is worldliness, *i. e.*, not a heavenly spirit, but a spirit pertaining entirely to the earth. Uncharitableness, the imputation of evil motives, bigotry, narrow prejudice, and every kind of selfishness, are forms of worldliness, *i. e.*, of an unheavenly spirit, even though they are so frequently found in the churches.

It is also true that our religion is less exacting in regard to specially religious services, — church-going, prayer-meetings, the ceremonies and sacraments. Perhaps we are too regardless of the importance of these things in deepening and purifying our religious feeling; but we are certain from the testimony of Jesus himself that there are surer tests of our acceptance with God than these observances, important as they are. In fact, we do not find that Jesus refers to them at all in speaking of the Judgment (where he states the conditions of divine approval), but has much to say about our treatment of each other; and we find that love for God and man is the true test of religion.

6. And now I come to the charge that although our faith is a good one to live by, it is a poor one to die by. The first thing to say about this is that as nearly all our time is spent in living and very little in dying, it is vastly more important to have a good religion to live by than to have a good one to die by, if such a distinction is to be made. It is exceedingly important to others how we live, and of little consequence to them how we die, — of inestimably greater importance how we spend our threescore years and ten among our fellow-men, than how we take leave of them at last.

But let us examine this charge a little closer. What do our Christian critics mean by a good religion to die by? They mean, of course, a religion that assures one of salvation, leads him to feel sure that he is going to heaven. Well, I should say, then, that if one were using this test to determine the value of a religion, he would choose Universalism or Catholicism without hesitation; for the believing Universalist or Catholic feels sure of heaven and dies without fear. I should say, also, that if a good religion to die by were the object of a man's search, Orthodoxy would be about the last thing to choose. I say this without any unkind or narrow feeling; but I say it because I have seen those who were waiting for death with composure, and who would have died in peace if their minds had been left undisturbed, — I have seen them unsettled, agonized, terror-stricken, by having injudicious friends present to them this same faith that they claim is so good to die by. By the aid of their natural trust in God's love and care they were quietly gliding down the stream of life, until these other views of the danger of hell and the need of Christ's blood darkened their sky, and raised about them the billows of unutterable anguish. Moreover, I should not choose Orthodoxy to die by, because many of its professors are doubtful even to the last about their salvation, fearful that they may not, after all, be among the elect, that they were not really converted; and among such have been many excellent religious souls.

It is true that this religion can say more comforting things to a murderer than ours can. It can make him believe — even if he has suddenly sent his victim to hell with not an instant's chance for conversion to save his soul — that he, himself, in "a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins," may be "plunged beneath that flood" and lose all his "guilty stains." This

religion tells him that he may find even the gallows to be "steps unto heaven;" and so he mounts the scaffold happy, hopeful, confident. "Can your religion do this for a dying murderer?" it is triumphantly asked; and I triumphantly answer "No," and thank God that it cannot, for we cannot thus encourage the most wicked crime. We have heard God in nature, in experience, in the Bible, declare that "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap!" "Every one shall receive according to the deeds done in the body;" and we have never heard that God has repealed that law. We think the teaching that so foul a crime does not hinder but may hasten a man's entrance to heaven (which would make murder a means of grace) helps to unsettle the foundations of morality. It appears to me a hideous travesty of religion for a man whose hands are red with a fellow-creature's blood to die in this happy, boastful way.

As a matter of fact, though men die happily in all religions, yet if the ability to quiet a dying person's fears, and enable him to die peacefully, be regarded as a sufficient test of the truth and efficacy of a religion, the palm must be awarded to the Roman Catholic faith. For the believer feels himself in the hands of a mighty Church which he thinks is God's vicegerent on earth; he submits to saving sacraments, and no shadow of anxiety remains upon his soul; and if, by some fault or accident, the final sacrament is hindered, he is able to believe that the Church that binds on earth may bind in heaven, and that in Purgatory his soul will await the saving offices that will finally restore him to heaven. Taken as a rule, no Christian believers die so peacefully, so confident of salvation, as Catholics; and if enabling one so to die is a fair test of the truth of a religion, their religion is truest and best.

But this is not the true test. The right criterion is,

"How does a religion help a man to live?" If our faith really is what our critics have usually conceded, a good religion to live by, then it is good enough for us and for the world. We do not care to claim that it is much better than others for this purpose; but we do hold that its ability to make us honest and true, open-minded and truth-loving, kind, generous, reverent, better members of the family and society, is the grand and final test of the worth of any religion. I believe it can be shown that in these qualities the members of our societies are not behind other Christians, and I do not care to claim any more for them. If we wish to show that we are any better, let us do it by deeds and not by words.

As to dying well, that will take care of itself if we live well. What is death? It is only the end of life, the dropping of the curtain when the last act closes. The all important question is how we have acted our part upon the stage of life. If we sincerely try to do God's will, the dread of death will seem a needless and craven fear. Whether Unitarians or Trinitarians, let us respect each other as equally loving and seeking the truth; let us live up to that truth as God reveals it to us; and let us then commit ourselves for life, death, and eternity to that God who will be the loving Father of us all forevermore.

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

A History of its Origin and Development

By George Willis Cooke, Member of the American Historical Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, American Academy of Political and Social Science, etc.

Size, 5 3-4 x 8 1-2 inches; pages, 463; 21 full-page illustrations; price, $2.00 *net;* postage, 14 cents additional.

THE purpose of this work is to furnish a complete, impartial, and candid record of the origin and growth of American Unitarianism, with accounts of its organization, its progress, and its relation to all present-day movements for social and religious betterment, all of which is presented in "the true spirit of the historical method, without reference to local interests and without sectional preferences." Controversial treatment is thus happily avoided. The author has made long and thorough examination of original manuscripts and journals, as well as many magazines, newspapers, and printed reports of various kinds. The result has been to bring together into a single octavo volume of 475 pages much valuable material, heretofore to be found only in widely scattered sources, and a large array of facts not obtainable elsewhere. The volume is fully indexed, making all references to any one topic readily accessible. The book thus becomes a valuable reference work as well as a thoroughly readable and instructive history. It has been written with special reference to its helpfulness in explaining the Unitarian attitude and temper.

The opening chapters begin with the English Sources of American Unitarianism, followed by chapters upon the Liberal Side of Puritanism, the Growth of Democracy in the Churches, and the Silent Advance of Liberalism. Then follows the organization of the American Unitarian Association, and its various activities as the national executive organization of our churches are fully set forth. Chapters are given to the accounts of the Sunday School Society, the Boston Fraternity of Churches, the Women's National Alliance, the Post-office Mission, and other enterprises which mark the spirit of Unitarian endeavor. The relation of Unitarianism to philanthropy, reforms, education, and literature, receive special chapters of unusual interest. The closing chapter treats of the future of Unitarianism.

In addition to the text itself are twenty-one full-page half-tone portrait illustrations of prominent Unitarian leaders, including a frontispiece of Channing. These grouped pictures add not a little to the general interest of the volume.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

25 Beacon Street, Boston

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FOURTH SERIES.] [No. 40.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL

AND

CONGREGATION.

BY

REV. HENRY H. BARBER.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

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The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
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SUNDAY-SCHOOL AND CONGREGATION.

I HAVE a problem to study with you to-day which is one of the most difficult and perplexing, yet one of the most important to be rightly solved and settled, of all questions concerning the administration of religion among us. It is vitally connected with the welfare of our churches and the future of religious institutions. More than that, it has close relations with the whole subject of moral and religious culture, and the methods of fixing religious impressions and forming religious character.

This problem is of the growing disconnection between the congregation and the Sunday-school, and so of the separation of the young and the mature, of parents and children, in their religious usages. The fact is patent. What is its meaning; what its causes; what, if any, its cure?

See how broad the fact is. I noted one Sunday that there were but twelve children under fifteen years old in my congregation; not more than as many more under twenty. In the Sunday-school, an hour later, there were a hundred and forty such children and young persons. Not more than fifteen to twenty-five per cent of the Sunday-school are habitually in the congregation.

And this is not peculiar to my church. Had it been, I should long ago have left my place to make room for some minister who could hold the interest and attract the presence of the young. But it is very much the same in

nearly every church I preach in; in some cases a little better, in others even worse. You would think Christendom was without children, to look on some Sunday congregations; or that Christians were all born grown up. If "Train up a child in the way he should go" holds its place as a maxim of wisdom, you would infer that way not to be towards the Sunday worship. That is the training which is systematically omitted. It is calculated in an Orthodox periodical I have just been reading that nearly four and a half millions of the young people of the Sunday-schools in this country do not attend church habitually; or that about eighty-five per cent of those found in the Sunday-schools on any given Sunday will not be found at the services of the congregation.

And this does not mean that the little children alone are absent. It means that the majority of the young people from twelve to twenty are absent; that the bright boys and girls who make up a large part of the audience at the concert and the lecture, who are in the formative and impressible stage of character, opinion, moral purpose, and habit, are not in the church.

It has gone further than that. A generation of children has grown up largely without the influence and training of church-going habits. The boys and girls whom you used to meet, a dozen or fifteen years ago, going home from the Sunday-school when you were going to church, are grown up now, — some of them with families of their own growing up about them. The result of that lack of training is distinctly seen in the looser hold of the Church upon these young men and women, the ease with which they absolve themselves from all church relations and from habitual church attendance.

In general it will be found that the supporters of religious institutions are those who were trained to habitual going to church through childhood and youth, and that those

who have come to manhood without feeling that they have any part or place in the services of the church, are very likely to continue indifferent to these services and absent from them. How shall the value and importance of religious institutions and usages be felt by those who have been left for twenty years to disregard them? If the people who sustain our churches were bent on finding some way quietly to abolish the Sunday services at the end of a generation, they could find no surer and directer means than to leave their children, and the children of the community, unused and untrained to attendance on these services up to the age of young manhood and womanhood.

In stating the extent of this disconnection of the church from the Sunday-school, I have already named one of its causes. The children are not expected to be in the church, are not trained to go there as a part of their regular religious habits. Some parents are slow to require anything of their children as religious habit. But I have not found that such parents are willing to trust the intellectual training of their children to their chance choices from day to day. Some accept the plea that their children are not interested in attending church. I do not think that they wait, however, for the child to express interest in secular instruction, or liking for the restraint of the school-room, before sending him to school. Many have adopted the somewhat current saying that the Sunday-school is the Children's Church. But if this method of a children's church is leaving children to grow up outside any church, and apart from the very churches that nourish the Sunday-schools, it needs to be very seriously considered.

For myself, I have always repudiated this theory of a Children's Church in any sense of releasing the young from attending public worship with their parents; not

only because I see that it must leave the habit of church-going unformed, and the churches of the next generation weakened in numbers and influence, but also because I believe it better for all the household, young and old, to worship God together than apart; and that the children gain more, in the long run, of religious impulse and influence from the service with their parents in church than they can gain from the Sunday-school hour, even when it is most profitably employed, — as it sometimes is not.

To be sure, young and restless children in church are more or less a trial to their parents for a time, and there is an age and quality of childhood wherein church attendance may well be reckoned premature; but in most cases disinclination and troublesome restlessness will give way to the persistent expectation and requirement that the child shall go to church and behave himself reverently. Indeed, is not much of the reluctance and uncomfortableness of children in regard to this the result of *un*persistent and reluctant influence on the part of parents? What if we should have to confess that the young in our households and the community fail to have interest in the Sunday worship and respect for it because they perceive the slight hold it has, and the feeble and intermitted interest it awakens, among the elders about them?

If the action of parents and Sunday-school teachers expressed the same continuous urgency of interest and made the same public opinion in favor of regular and reverent attendance at church as upon secular instruction, there is little doubt that the children would give it the same punctual and decent heed. And if the interests of character and Christian faith are the realities we hold them to be, and not a holy make-believe, I think we should be less willing to have them absent from the Sunday service and the Sunday-school than from any day's sessions of the public school. It sometimes seems as if many people

thought moral and religious culture would "come by nature," as Dogberry affirmed of reading and writing, so utterly secondary and slipshod is the attention given to their attainment.

But I said that the Sunday-school cannot take the place of the church service for the young, because influence is more than instruction, and because parents and children need to be together in their religious usages and life. Indeed, if for nothing else, I would discourage the notion of a children's church because the life of young and old, of parents and children, in our country and our time, is already lamentably too much apart. Society suffers, the home suffers, the young especially lose, by this increasing separation in culture, recreation, and social intercourse. Let not the church help to widen this division. Let parents and children give thanks together for the blessing of the household, and seek together the truths and helps that shall make the common life richer and nobler. It is not needful to his profit that the child should "understand" fully all topics discussed from the pulpit. If it were, who would care to hear, or dare to speak? It is among not the least profitable of spiritual exercises to look up to themes above our full comprehension and into experiences deeper and larger than our own. And it were surely better to bring the ordinary conduct of public worship more largely within range of the sympathies and apprehension of the young than to let them be left out, and dismissed altogether to a children's church by themselves.

No Sunday-school teacher whom I know wants to take the responsibility of making his instructions take the place of the influences of the church service; still less, is willing to have the work of the Sunday-school take the place of life-long church attendance, through leaving the habit unformed and unurged. Most of the ministers I know

are seriously considering whether, with all the good the Sunday-school is doing, and is capable of doing, it will not do a greater harm, if it must continue more and more, as in the last generation, to furnish excuse for the non-attendance of children at church, and be the occasion of preventing the young from forming that habit of reverent attendance upon public worship, which is the steady support of our religious institutions. To do their work effectively all institutions need to be strong in the habitual regard and support of the community.

What I have said would be important, even if the Sunday-school, as organized, did or could furnish adequate religious training for the period during which it retains its members. It would still turn out the young without the church-going habit and the regard for public worship which is the church's strength. But in point of fact we know that the best Sunday-schools are not thus adequate, that the average Sunday-school is very far from being adequate, to do all that the young need for religious counsel and guidance through their formative years. How can it be? It is but an hour a week, with various interruptions and drawbacks; and, in the case even of the best teachers, with a constant sense of working at great subjects with inadequate opportunity for preparation, with next to no preparation on the pupil's part, and often with insufficient sense of the importance of the work. For it must be borne in mind that the Sunday-school partakes of the same undervaluation, and suffers from the same lack of punctual and earnest interest on the part of parents and children, which has allowed the latter to drop away from church attendance. The Sunday-school is not free from agencies which hinder serious and thorough religious work. It, also, feels the press of secular motives and the drag of shallow interest, and needs itself, therefore, to be supplemented by all that the church can do, even where it

does not also need to be reformed or reinspired by the motives which make the church's power and value.

This is not saying that the Sunday-school is not competent to do great good; it is only saying that it is not alone adequate, and that its work is not always in the same line as that of the church, and does not always greatly help in that. Sometimes, indeed, the Sunday-school is the more efficient religious organization of the two. I know ministers of large and prosperous churches who feel that their Sunday-school work is more important, and more in the line of vital Christian work, than the regular services of the congregation. But this happens where large mission-schools are gathered, drawing into some real relation with religious agencies many who otherwise would grow up without any relations with them whatever. Yet in certain other churches I have sometimes felt that the geniality, unconstraint, hearty singing, the general joining in prayer and Scripture, in the Sunday-school, contrasted favorably with the somewhat chilly atmosphere, the elaborate music performed but never joined in, the minister's solitary service of devotion, listened to but hardly recognized even by change of posture or gesture, the discourse among speculative themes far from common human interests, — I have sometimes seen in such a contrast reason to think the Sunday-school the truer and more real church. It may very likely happen, also, that the methods of the best Sunday-schools shall be more nearly approached in the worship of the congregation; the service-book may be oftener adopted, — the freer singing, the directer and less formal study of the Bible and of religious truth But the Sunday-school can only take the place of the church service when it shall come to include adults as well as children, and make its plans not for childhood alone but for the life-time of those who attend. The service *together,* and the preaching service in some form, is the

larger thing in religious culture and worship, and must not be set aside or have its future discounted in advance by the failure to connect our children with its associations and habitual influences.

1. The first measure of security, then, for our religious institutions is to bring our children to church as well as to the Sunday-school, and to let it be understood that we expect the young to be with us there as a part of their sacred duty to the truth and worship the church stands for, and of their duty to themselves. The plea of overburdening them with the hour and a quarter in the church, followed or preceded by the hour in the Sunday-school with its varied exercises, is absurd and unworthy when we consider the requirements of other days, and the comparative importance of this training into religious habits and character. The plea of lack of interest and lack of comprehension is not admitted with reference to other departments of culture of far less importance.

2. To prevent the detached and sometimes discordant action of the parts of our religious mechanism, involving such waste of force and failure in permanent results, we must regard, and teach the children to regard, the Sunday-school not as an independent organization, nor as their substitute for the services of the church, but as its assistant and feeder, the training-place for its work and worship, the opportunity to study its faith and methods, the appointed agency through which to be fitted for its fellowship and various services. So regarding it, we shall make the instruction of the Sunday-school connect closely with the worship of the congregation. At present nothing can be more unlike, in general, than the mode of conducting Sunday-school services as compared with the usual order of congregational worship. For instance, nearly all our Sunday-schools use a service-book, from which the children are taught to join in

responsive reading of Scripture and in common prayer. In most of our congregations, on the other hand, the people have no vocal part in the devotional services. Would it not be well to consider whether our Sunday-school habit is not unfitting our children to appreciate, or to be satisfied with, our mode of congregational worship? Is it not likely to seem bare and strange to them to miss the active participation they have been expected and trained in the Sunday-school to take? And will not this training lead them to fall naturally into churches where ritual service and common prayer continue for them the associations and usages of their Sunday-schools?

This may seem a small matter; but it illustrates a lack of consistency and congruity in our religious methods that is not unto edifying. If it is needful and good for the children to take part in service and prayer in the Sunday-school, the same reasons will hold, and the same necessity be felt by them, in the worship of the congregation. If such common service is impracticable or undesirable in the congregation, it is a serious mistake to make it the religious habit of those who ought to help make up our congregations, and must be depended on to make them up hereafter, — unless, indeed, we count it ecclesiastical wisdom to train them to enjoy and desire church services ordered after a method quite other than our own. Each joint should supply something to compact, not to dissolve; and in the difference of judgment concerning ritual among us, it would be well, at least, to adopt some method by which the course of each church and its Sunday-school should be fairly consistent with each other. Certainly, if the present differences are to continue, all the more need is there that the children be taken early to church that they may be habituated to its methods, and not alone to those found in connection with the churches of another order. Best of all, however, if we can make the impression

of school and church accordant, the instructions and usages of the one preparative for the other.

3. Something akin to this is to be said of the service of song. We take great pains to find hymns and tunes appropriate, or at least attractive, for the children to sing in the Sunday-school; a few times in the year, perhaps, we fill our churches with young and old to hear the children sing; but in the church service we have made quite other arrangements for an entirely different order of sacred music, and it is much grace if the congregation is permitted to join in the singing of one or two familiar hymns. I have no thought of entering into the question of choir or congregational singing, further than to say that the more kinds of really devotional song in the Sunday services, the richer and better — other things being equal — they will be; and that, on the other hand, no splendors of organ or choir can make a service complete, and quite what it ought to be, without hearty congregational singing of the hymns.

But I wish to point out the loss of force and opportunity in teaching a set of songs in the Sunday-school, never heard in the church except on these anniversary occasions, while the tunes that the congregation sing are left untaught to the children — or, indeed, to anybody. Why should not the work of the Sunday-school include practice for the congregational hymns? If the children's tastes should require some bending from the dignity of the few old tunes the congregation can really sing, this would be amply compensated by the increased variety and spirit which the presence of the children and their singing would bring into the Sunday worship. But, in point of fact, — and speaking, I trust, with due modesty, — no such descent would be necessary. In the present state of musical attainment, — thanks to the musical training in our public schools, — the young people of our Sunday-schools

are quite equal to mastering and enjoying, for instance, the excellent new music of the Revised Hymn and Tune Book of the Unitarian Association. Much of this music is at once richer and more appropriate for Sunday-school use than the secular jingles which are so often found in books prepared for Sunday-schools, and so soon worn threadbare. If the children could be taught these better chorals, and then with the choir help to teach them to the congregation, it would be a common gain, and an access of interest for all. That would be the whole body fitly joined together.

Of the possibilities of the Sunday-school to be of great service in enriching this part of worship, I have a piece of evidence that is in point. I not long ago attended a concert which consisted in large part of the rendering of a considerable piece of sacred music, all the choruses of which were executed by young people then or lately in our public schools, many of them members of our own Sunday-school. It is not too much to say that no musical society of the country would have had need to be ashamed of this performance; and the feeling was very strong in me that its uplifting influence ought not to end with that audience and that evening, but was just what our churches need to enrich their Sunday worship. Divided into three or four parts, led by the choir, and judiciously repeated, it would have made the service of sacred song in any of our churches more beautiful, worshipful, and complete for half the Sundays of a season. Something like that may be attempted in all our larger Sunday-schools when their organic connection with the administration and worship of the church is felt and fostered as it should be, and there is "effectual working in the measure of every part." Our Western Sunday-school workers have, in idea at least, caught the spirit of this advance, in striving to fit their new services to a higher style of music, which

may well be transferred afterwards to the worship of the congregation.

4. Another line, in which the disconnection is happily not so entire, but in which there is need of heartier co-operation, is that of charitable and missionary work. It is important that the enterprises in which the church is engaged should be understood and shared in by the Sunday-school, — that its local charities, its causes of reform and philanthropy, its denominational interests and missions should have the intelligent sympathy of the young, into whose charge all these things must come so soon. Most important it is to make them feel that the work is their work, and its interest and obligation theirs; that their religious consciousness should be enlarged and their moral sympathies expanded in the fellowship of its high and universal ends. This sharing of large interests, purposes, hopes, is a great part of the value of the church for all, and in the systematic enforcement of them upon the attention and regard of the young is the promise of great things for the efficiency and spiritual enterprise of the church of the future. What a culture of generous sympathies and broad humanities the grand missionary enterprises of the evangelical bodies have been, rewarding a hundred-fold — in their reflex influence and greatened sense of human fellowship and obligation, — the churches that have cherished them.

5. With this is connected, of course, the duty of clear and careful teaching in the Sunday-school of the religious truth and faith, both in the larger and the more special sense, for which our churches stand and in which they seek to grow. This is so manifestly and directly the office of the Sunday-school that it would need no more than mention, were it not that the same spirit of individualism and indifference, that permits the lack of connection I have complained of, works also to prevent any systematic or

earnest study of distinctively religious themes, and wastes the opportunity of the Sunday-school hour in vague generalities or secular conversation. Worse than that, the serious ends of Sunday-school instruction are sometimes forgotten altogether, and the connection with religious institutions becomes wholly formal, and so absurd and harmful. A Sunday-school class that meets only for a social chat, or to find or organize amusement, had better be disbanded at once. A Sunday-school or a religious society is weakened, not strengthened, by any adherents, however numerous or otherwise valuable, whose only interest is — and remains — that of social advantage and opportunity. And when either consciously organizes or is administered on that basis it sinks speedily into neglect and deserved contempt. The Sunday-school is most helpful to the church when it makes plainest to the children and commends to them most convincingly and winningly the ideas and religious ends for which the church seeks to stand.

6. The vital connection of Sunday-school instruction and church administration will be most completely realized when the former learns how systematically to fit and lead the children up to active and avowed membership in the religious body. Here is the greatest failure hitherto, here the opportunity of greatest and most beneficent success. Besides the moral instruction which has primary relations to conduct, besides direct training into the worship, work, and doctrine of the church, the religious society which believes in itself and in its future should labor to bring its children into recognized fellowship with its organized and corporate life. The sooner the Sunday-school sets before itself distinctly and systematically this end of training its children into the duties and communion of Christian life and church life, the sooner will our churches put on the beautiful garments of a true prosperity and an

increasing efficiency, usefulness, and honor in the community.

The old evangelical notion of lassoing one by one the reprobate and untamed spirits outside the pale of religious safety, and bringing them in to burnish the life of a Christian commonwealth and draw the car of Christian progress, has been long discredited as the best method in religion. The transcendental theory — that if you can get far enough away from conventional teaching and institutional influences, into pure nature and individual freedom, you will get the best religious and moral life — is even more palpably and provedly absurd. Take people away from accustomed institutions, training, the heritage of the past, the influences of moral culture and gentle manners, and the inspiration that comes from constant and living contact with these things, and you leave them to deepening savagery and spiritual disaster. The method of careful and steadfast culture into the religious habitudes, agencies, and activities we hold to be helpful and needful for us and for the community, cannot be adopted too early or pursued too vigorously. "The increase of the body" of good influences, moral convictions, and Christian trusts cannot begin to be "compacted" too painstakingly nor too soon.

The subject on which I have addressed you is one of methods and administration. Do not therefore regard it unworthy your serious consideration. It presupposes the religious earnestness and consecration without which all methods are of no avail. I have sought to point out some ways in which the growing disconnection between the Sunday-school and the worship of the congregation may be remedied. Our interest in religious institutions is not so strong, nor our religious activity so abundant, that we can afford to waste and dissipate our spiritual forces, or work in detached sections without common methods, and so often at cross-purposes. For the lack of unity of plan

and end, our religious effort and enterprise are too often without result, illustrations of motion without progress, like a locomotive whose wheels fly round and round upon the track, or an ancient clock that whirs when the hours come round but fails to strike.

The essential religious views held by our churches meet with increasing favor and acceptance among the new populations that fill our towns and cities. The opportunity of Liberal Christianity was never so bright as now. But our religious methods are seriously defective; and unless they can be newly vitalized, and adapted to gather in more largely and hold more strongly and livingly the interest and the hearts of the young people of our communities, and even of our own communion, there is no future for our churches, nor any place for them in an age whose religious thought and work are supremely concerned with character and life.

The ultra-evangelical theory waits for men to be made Christians by miracle, and builds its church for the fellowship of rescued souls. The ultra-transcendental theory teaches that men are Christians — or something better — by natural endowment, and is neglectful to build any church at all. But the whole trend of modern thought is sweeping us back to the conviction, at once catholic and rational, of the tremendous power of institutions, and the regnant formative influence of traditions, example, habits, culture, spiritual atmosphere. Institutional religion is the ecclesiastical equivalent of the current doctrine of the importance of the environment. If life be, as Mr. Herbert Spencer defines it, — and as life certainly must maintain, — if life be "the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations," it is of supreme importance that the given "internal relations" of the child's nature shall find helpful and adequate "external relations" to which they may adjust themselves. And if religious life be not a

maladjustment altogether, which had better get itself discontinued, its wholesomeness and vigor will greatly depend upon favoring and well-prepared conditions, — in the language of this school, upon "fortunate environment."

Even the life of what we call the lower animals ought to teach us how potent are careful training and surrounding influences. We talk of the wonderful power of instinct; and this gift to these humble companions of ours is certainly remarkable beyond all statement or description. But we are coming to learn that much of what we have thought instinct is the result of tradition and education. The bird will speedily peck at food when liberated from the shell. Perhaps it would learn to use its wings unaided, without the cruel kindness which pushes it at length from the parent nest. But with all its wonderful instincts the bird's original powers are not sufficient in themselves. Experiments show that the variety and richness of its song are learned by imitation and the contact of good society. The songster shut apart from his mates does little more than chirp. He needs the vocal prophets and evangelists of his kind to reveal to him the fulness of his nature and show him the reach of his powers. The bird's song is not wholly an original gift to the first robin or canary. It is a tradition gained through the ages, — partly embodied in throat and nerves and delicate susceptibilities, but partly also requiring to be learned anew, generation by generation, — and gaining something in compass and sweetness through the experience of each.

So the religious nature of man, the supreme instincts of conscience, reverence, and trust, are quickened and unfolded, and made a new life of melody and gladness, by the inspiration of high examples and the culture of sacred influences, as they are folded within the shelter of venerable institutions of worship and moral training, and listen to

the great voices that chant out of the gathered witness of the present and the past the strains of duty, praise, and immortal hope, and grow themselves accordant with the harmony and vocal with the holy spirit of trust and service in which humanity utters its divinest life, and the Church lifts up "her unending song."

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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